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THE PSALMS

A STUDY OF THE VULGATE PSALTER IN THE LIGHT OF THE HEBREW TEXT

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THE PSALMS

A STUDY OF THE VULGATE PSALTER IN THE LIGHT OF THE HEBREW TEXT

BY

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VOLUME TWO
PSALMS LXXII-CL

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PREFACE

IN this volume the author has applied to the Psalms of Books III–V of the Vulgate Psalter the methods of explanation which were used in the first volume of the Commentary. His chief care throughout has been to make the meaning of the Vulgate Psalms so obvious in the English translation that a careful reader might be able to gather that meaning from the mere reading of the translation without using either the introductions or notes. The introductions and annotations were intended to serve primarily to indicate and justify the author's method of arriving at his English rendering. Hence, in the first volume—and particularly in the earlier part of that volume—the introductions and commentary were so planned as to contain only the most essential points in very brief form. The insistence, however, of friendly critics of Vol. I on the importance for the religious interests of readers of detailed information as to the probable occasion, the literary structure and thought-sequence, and the doctrinal implications of each Psalm has induced the author to treat these matters more fully in the second volume than in the first. This slight difference in the general method of the Commentary will not, it is hoped, lead readers to suppose that the translation has been regarded as of lesser importance in the second volume than in the first. The author would like to think that his English rendering of the Vulgate Psalms 72–150 conveys of itself—apart from introductions and notes—a substantially clear notion of the literal sense of those Psalms.

In Vol. II—as in Vol. I—the numbering of the verses in the Psalms is in accordance with the numbering of Hetzenauer's edition of the Vulgate.

The replies of the Biblical Commission concerning the date and authorship of the Psalms, which have been kept in view throughout this Commentary, are here printed as an Appendix.

It has not appeared necessary to prepare an Index to the Commentary. References to parallel passages in all points of doctrinal, historical, and linguistic exposition are so numerous in the notes that the need of an Index is not likely to be keenly felt by any attentive reader.

The specialist work on the Psalter which has been published since the appearance of Vol. I of this Commentary has been carefully consulted in the preparation of Vol. II. A list of the more important recent works on the Psalter which have been helpful to the author is given below.

To the Right Rev. Monsignor Walsh, V.G., President, Holy Cross College, Clonliffe, who, in spite of the pressure of numerous official duties, found time to read the MS. of this volume and to make many valuable suggestions for the improvement of the English version, the author's cordial thanks are due. His thanks are due also to the Rev. M. B. Langford, M.A., who assisted in preparing the MS. for the printer and read a great part of the proofs. To the Rev. J. McQuaid, C.S.Sp., M.A., who undertook and patiently carried through the task of verifying the Biblical references in the Commentary, and read the entire work in proof, the author is very specially indebted.

P. B.

St. Patrick's College, Maynooth.

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In addition to the works enumerated in the Introduction, Vol. I, pp. lxviii f., the following recently published works have been frequently consulted during the preparation of Volume II.

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PSALM LXXII

GOD IS MY PORTION

THE traditional teaching of Israel made happiness and success the necessary consequence of virtue, and unhappiness and failure the inevitable result of disregard of the Law. The classical statement of this view is Psalm i. *Cf.* Job c. 18. 20. Yet in practice it was found that the wicked were often prosperous, while the loyal servants of the Lord were forced to endure distress and sorrow. This contrast between teaching and fact, this apparent breakdown of traditional belief, is the problem of this psalm. It is the problem, also, of the Book of Job. Does God really heed the doings of men? Is there indeed knowledge of things human in the Most High? Is it true, as Psalm xxxvi. 25, says: *Junior fui, etenim senui, et non vidi justum derelictum, nec semen eius requirens panem?* *Cf.* Ecclesiastes vii. 14; Mal. iii. 14, 15.

The poet begins with the lesson which he has gathered from all his trials and all his experience—that God is good to the clean of heart. Yet for a time he had almost—if not actually—doubted this truth: his feet had almost slipped when he compared the lot of the wicked with his own. Like Job he had seen himself and other pious men poor and weak and distressed, while 'the godless lived on, grew old, and became mighty in power, their seed well established with them, and their offspring before their eyes, and no rod of God upon them'—(Job c. xxi). The godless who had grown wealthy, scorned the old-fashioned ways of the lovers of the Law. Pride they wore like a necklace (according to the Hebrew), and with crime and violence they were clad, as with a garment. Yet God did not smite them, and the simple among the people were tempted to follow their ways, and to ask: Does God care? The psalmist himself was tempted with the rest, and wondered whether he had kept his hands clean in vain. This was the moment when his feet had well-nigh stumbled. But at last light came to his soul. He began to realise that his doubts were treason against God, and a rejection of the traditional belief that the Israelites were the special children of God. During a visit in the Temple the truth was borne in upon his soul that the joy of the wicked is short, their path slippery, and their end dreadful, and that the real value of their success is to be estimated by taking into account the close of their career. Some particular incident which the psalmist had heard of before his visit to the Temple (possibly some sensational downfall of a wicked man who had been deemed secure) may have

led his thought in this direction, and, through a special grace of enlightenment, he was brought to realise clearly that the glory of wealth is no more substantial than the visions of a dream, and that his doubts of God's care and goodness had sprung from brutish ignorance. Thus he was made to feel, as of old, that the Lord held his hand, and was leading him along the true path. He understood with fulness of comprehension that the true joy of life is close contact with God, and that, in comparison with it, all the wealth of the godless is little worth. Once more he realised, but more poignantly than ever before, that there was nothing on earth or in heaven that he desired but to cling close to God. The words of the psalmist seem to imply that this clinging to God, and living in close association with God, will continue not merely during earthly life, but will last on into the life beyond the grave. God will be his portion for ever. He will no more ponder over the problem of God's rule of the world. It is enough for him that God will be always close at hand to protect him. *Cf.* 2 Cor. xii. 9.

The psalm falls naturally into three parts: (*a*) the conflict in the soul of the psalmist (2–16); (*b*) the victory of his faith (17–24); (*c*) the fruits of that victory (25–28). Psalms xlviii and xxxvi, as well as Psalm i, should be closely compared as regards theme and treatment, with this psalm.

1. Psalmus Asaph.

Quam bonus Israel Deus his, qui recto sunt corde!
2. Mei autem pene moti sunt pedes: pene effusi sunt gressus mei.
3. Quia zelavi super iniquos, pacem peccatorum videns.

4. Quia non est respectus morti eorum: et firmamentum in plaga eorum.
5. In labore hominum non sunt, et cum hominibus non flagellabuntur:

6. Ideo tenuit eos superbia, operti sunt iniquitate et impietate sua.
7. Prodiit quasi ex adipe iniquitas eorum: transierunt in affectum cordis.
8. Cogitaverunt, et locuti sunt nequitiam: iniquitatem in excelso locuti sunt.
9. Posuerunt in cœlum os suum: et lingua eorum transivit in terra

1. A psalm of Asaph.

How good to Israel is God,
To those who are clean of heart!
2. Yet my feet had almost stumbled,
My steps had well nigh slipped,

3. For I was jealous 'gainst sinners,
As I looked on the peace of the godless.

4. For they take no thought of their death:
No evil of theirs abideth.

5. In the troubles of men they share not;
With mortals they are not smitten.

6. Wherefore pride holds them prisoners:
With sin and with crime they are clad.

7. Out of fatness their sin goeth forth,
They follow the lust of their hearts.

8. Perversely they think and they speak;
Of sin they speak proudly.

9. Against heaven they turn their mouth,
And their tongue speedeth all through the land.

10. Ideo convertetur populus meus hic: et dies pleni invenientur in eis.
11. Et dixerunt: Quomodo scit Deus, et si est scientia in excelso?
12. Ecce ipsi peccatores, et abundantes in sæculo, obtinuerunt divitias.

10. Therefore my people turneth towards them,
For fulness of days is theirs.
11. They say: 'How can God know it?
Is there knowledge indeed in the Most High?'
12. Lo, such are the wicked;
On earth they are wealthy,
Riches they pile up.

13. Et dixi: Ergo sine causa justificavi cor meum, et lavi inter innocentes manus meas:
14. Et fui flagellatus tota die, et castigatio mea in matutinis,

13. So I said: In vain, then, have I kept my heart clean,
And washed my hands mid the guiltless,
14. And submitted to scourging each day;
While my scourging was daily renewed.

15. Si dicebam: Narrabo sic: ecce nationem filiorum tuorum reprobavi.
16. Existimabam ut cognoscerem hoc, labor est ante me:

15. If I said: 'Thus shall I speak';
Then the race of thy children I should have condemned.
16. I took thought to realise that—
Toil it was in my eyes.

17. Donec intrem in Sanctuarium Dei: et intelligam in novissimis eorum.
18. Verumtamen propter dolos posuisti eis: dejecisti eos dum allevarentur.

17. At last I entered God's shrine,
And gave thought to their final lot.
18. 'Tis, surely, because of their treachery
Thou sendest them (evil):
Thou castest them down when they rebel.

19. Quomodo facti sunt in desolationem, subito defecerunt: perierunt propter iniquitatem suam.
20. Velut somnium surgentium Domine, in civitate tua imaginem ipsorum ad nihilum rediges.

19. How quickly they are brought to defeat.
Altogether they fail because of their sin.
20. Like a dream at awakening, O Lord,
In Thy city Thou defeatest their vain schemes.

21. Quia inflammatum est cor meum, et renes mei commutati sunt:
22. Et ego ad nihilum redactus sum, et nescivi.
23. Ut jumentum factus sum apud te: et ego semper tecum.
24. Tenuisti manum dexteram meam: et in voluntate tua deduxisti me, et cum gloria suscepisti me.
25. Quid enim mihi est in cœlo? et a te quid volui super terram?
26. Defecit caro mea, et cor meum: Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum.

21. When my heart was embittered,
And my reins were disturbed,
22. I was brought unto naught,
And had no understanding;
23. Like a brute was I before Thee,
Yet was I ever with Thee:
24. Thou graspest my right hand,
And guidest me in Thy plan,
And with honour Thou receivest me.
25. What is there for me in heaven,
And what wish I on earth, but Thee?
26. Let my body and my spirit pine away,
Thou art the God of my heart,
And my portion, O God, for ever.

27. Quia ecce, qui elongant se a te, peribunt: perdidisti omnes, qui fornicantur abs te

27. Behold, they perish who withdraw from Thee;
Thou destroyest those who are unfaithful to Thee.

28. Mihi autem adhærere Deo bonum est: ponere in Domino Deo spem meam:
Ut annuntiem omnes prædicationes tuas, in portis filiæ Sion.

28. For me it is precious to cling close to God
To set my hope on the Lord God;
That I may proclaim all Thy praise,
In the gates of the daughter of Sion.

---

1. *Psalmus Asaph; cf.* Ps. xlix. 1.

The first verse of this psalm is an emphatic summary of what the psalmist has learned through his study of God's dealings with men. However the pious may seem to fail, and the ungodly to succeed, it is to the upright alone that God is a Friend. The psalm describes how the psalmist had been tempted to doubt this truth, and how he has been rescued from his doubts, and made to realise that wealth and worldly success are vain and fleeting, and that the friendship of God is the only true good—a good that belongs to the upright alone. Thus, at the beginning of the poem, we find placed dramatically the outcome of the mental struggle which the psalm depicts.

The Hebrew consonantal text of the verse, when properly divided, gives the sense:

Yea, good to the just man is 'El,
'Elohim to the pure of heart!

Quam; the Greek translators read *'ekh* (how!) instead of *'akh* (verily!).

2. The slipping of the feet suggests the beginning of the loss of his loving trust in Divine providence—the beginning of the doubts which are put into words below in verse 13*f*.

Moti=made to totter. *Effusi* translates literally the Hebrew *shupp^e^khu*: like water poured out, the footsteps took no definite direction. Firm walking on a straight path implies confidence and certainty; hesitation and indefiniteness of movement imply the opposite.

3. *Zelavi*: the disturbance of his mind at the apparent success of the godless. This it was that inclined his feet to stumble. *Pax* does not mean 'peace' merely; the Hebrew *shalom* includes, in addition to peace, the ideas of health, well-being, success.

4. In the Latin text it is probably better to take the negative with both clauses. The godless take no thought of death, and even when they are in any way afflicted, there is no permanence (*firmamentum*) in their trouble. This fits in well with what immediately follows. But there are difficulties when we compare the Vulgate with the Hebrew and Greek. The Hebrew text probably ought to be read:

Ki 'en ḥarṣubboth lamo:
Tam ubhari' 'ulam.
'They have no troubles; sound and fat is their body.'

The idea of death has come in through arranging the consonants of

the words *lamo tam* so as to read *l^e^motham* ('unto their death'). *Respectus* represents the Greek ἀνάνευσις, 'refusal' (which translates *ḥarṣubboth* also in Num. xxx. 6). The Hebrew *ḥarṣubboth* really means 'bonds,' and may, therefore, have been taken by the Greek translators as suggesting the idea of compulsion or reluctance. 'There is no reluctance in regard to their death' would mean that the godless did not find difficulty even in death—their death being so easy that they did not seek to evade it. The translation of the oldest Latin psalters—*non est declinatio morti* is, apparently, to be understood this way.

Firmamentum in plaga eorum takes the place of the Hebrew, 'And fat is their body.' It is difficult to equate the Greek (Latin) and Massoretic texts here. The Hebrew *'ul*, translated 'body,' is not quite certain in meaning. Jerome has here, following Symmachus, *Et firma sint vestibula eorum*, which supposes *'ulamam*, instead of *'ulam*. One is inclined to suspect that the Septuagint translators read in their Hebrew text *ḥolyam* ('their sickness,' or 'suffering') where the Massoretes have *'ulam*. *Firmamentum* is no less difficult than *plaga*. Yet, though the Vulgate text is not easily brought into relation with the Massoretic, its general sense is clear enough. Even if the negative is not extended to the second clause (*et firmamentum*, etc.) it can be intelligibly explained as meaning that if the godless should happen to be attacked by any trouble or affliction, they have a stronghold, or coign of vantage (*firmamentum*) to which they may withdraw for security. It is possible that *bari'* (='fat') was read by the Greek interpreters as *b^e^riaḥ* (=bolt, bar)? Even in their sickness or smiting they have some kind of protection or security.

Jerome renders the verse thus:

Quod non recogitaverint de morte sua,
et firma sint vestibula eorum.

5. They have no share in the common sorrows of men—the *labores hominum*, and do not suffer, like others, from the usual blows of fortune.

6. Overweening pride is the outcome of their unbroken success. The Hebrew is more vivid than the Latin:

'Pride is their necklace;
Violence covers them like a garment.'

In the second half of the verse *iniquitas* and *impietas* form a doublet. The necklace and the garment are suggestive of the shamelessness and the vanity of their pride. The godless are typical oriental parvenus, spending freely on gaudy ornaments the produce of their unscrupulous dealings. But the idea may be, and more probably is, that sin and violence cleave to the godless like a necklace or garment. Jerome renders:

Ideo nutriti sunt ad superbiam:
circumdederunt iniquitatem sibi

7. The Greek translators read *'awonemo,* 'their iniquity,' instead of the Masoretic reading *'enemo,* 'their eyes.' The Greek (=Latin) is more intelligible, since it is not easy to understand how their eyes could be said to come forth from their fat. The meaning of the phrase is that their malice has its source in their wealth (fatness), or that it springs from their perverse heart (Ps. xvi. 10; *Adipem suum concluserunt*).

Transierunt: the Hebrew has: 'The thoughts of their hearts burst forth (or, 'break loose').' The Hebrew verb *'abhar* implies excess, passing beyond bounds. Hence the translation *transierunt.* For *in affectum* we should have *affectus* (as subject of *transierunt*). Jerome follows the Massoretic reading closely:

Processerunt a pinguedine oculi eorum:
transierunt cogitationes cordis.

The 'coming forth' of the eyes must have been understood by the Massoretes and by Jerome (as well as by the Targum, and Aquila, and Symmachus) as a further suggestion of the haughty appearance of the godless.

8. In the translation, *in excelso* is taken as meaning 'proudly,' but the sense of the Hebrew would, probably, be better conveyed by *de excelso.* The godless speak in their pride, as it were, *from above,* as if they were in the heights of heaven. *Cf.* Isaias xiv. 10.

9. Their speech is directed against heaven and earth, against God and men. The Hebrew verb rendered by *transivit* implies here the energy of constant movement: their tongue ranges up and down through the land. Not satisfied with blaspheming against God, they spare not one of their fellows.

10. The reading which the Septuagint translators had before them here was

Lakhen yashubh 'ammi h^{a}lom
wime male' yimmaṣ^{e}u lamo.

Jerome, who renders the second clause *Et quis plenus invenietur in eis?* must have read in his Hebrew text *umi male' yimmaṣe' lamo.* The Massoretes read in the first clause *'ammo* (his people, *i.e.* the followers of the godless), and in the second, *ume male' yimmaṣ^{e}u lamo,* 'and waters abundant are found in them.'

The verse implies that the wealth and evil example of the godless tend to seduce many Israelites. The *dies pleni* of the Vulgate may be taken as the days of abundance which those who are seduced enjoy. The 'abundant waters' of the Massoretic text could be understood as symbolising the maxims of the godless which are as eagerly assimilated by their dupes as water is drunk by the thirsty. *Cf.* Is. xii. 3; John iv. 7*ff.*; vii. 38, 39.

11, 12. As the Latin stands, these verses voice the doubts of the pious. The *scientia* is the knowledge of the pride of the godless and

the misery of the pious. *In Excelso* = 'with the Most High.' *Cf.* Ps. ix. 26.

Abundantes in sæculo; the Hebrew means 'for ever secure': *cf.* Ps. xxix. 7; *Ego dixi in abundantia mea* ('in my security') *non movebor in æternum.* For similar use of *abundantia* see Ps. cxxi. 6, 7.

13. If the wicked have all the good luck, is it not folly to be pious? The *et dixi* has nothing corresponding in the Hebrew text, but it correctly introduces the words that follow. We have here the doubts of the psalmist himself.

Inter innocentes; Hebrew, 'in cleanness'; Jerome, *in innocentia.*

14. *In matutinis,* 'every morning.' *Cf.* Ps. c. 7; Is. xxxiii. 2; Lament. iii, 23.

15. The psalmist realises that if he were to express his doubts openly, it would be a betrayal of the faith of Israel. What he has so far said, he has not publicly proclaimed. The betrayal would consist in admitting that the Israelites were not really what they believed themselves to be, the *natio filiorum tuorum,* the people of God. To maintain this would also be blasphemy against God.

16. Since to express his doubts would be a sin against the faith of Israel and treason against the God of Israel, the psalmist felt that he must devote all his energy to thinking out the problem of the good fortune of the wicked (=*hoc*). But the problem was a difficult one—*labor est.*

17. At this point the solution began to appear. The psalmist entered the Temple and there he was enlightened (how we are not told) to realise that the success of the wicked could only be properly estimated by considering the close of their career (*novissima eorum*). *Intelligere in*='to attend closely to.'

18. The Hebrew has: 'Yea, Thou hast set them on slippery paths.' The Greek translators took *ḥ^alaḥoth* to mean deceit or treachery: it really means slippery paths. In the Latin we must supply an object with *posuisti*; it is natural to insert *mala* (evil). Jerome translates correctly: *In lubrico posuisti eos*; God has made insecure the ways of the wicked, even though they look on themselves as 'secure for ever.'

Dum allevarentur; the Hebrew of this clause, in parallelism with the preceding, has, 'Thou hast cast them down in ruins.' The Greek translators read, apparently, *l^emas'oth* instead of *l^emashshu'oth*; they understood the text to mean either that the wicked are cast down to ruin at the moment when they are proudly exalting themselves, or that their very exaltation is itself their casting down.

19. This verse shows that the *dum allevarentur* of the preceding verse is less correct than Jerome's *ad interitum. . . Propter iniquitatem* ought to be, according to the Hebrew, *prae terrore.*

20. *Somnium surgentium*; they are brushed aside by God as one

puts away at awakening the dread of a terrifying dream. This conveys the idea of the suddenness of their destruction.

The second part of the verse is made difficult by the mistake of the Greek translators in reading *ba'ir*, 'in the city,' instead of *b^e^ha'ir* (or *b^e^'ur*) 'at awakening.' The *imago* is either the pomp of the godless, or their ambitions. When God awakes, as it were, from His slumber, He will sweep away their apparently secure splendour as one sets aside at awakening the dread visions of sleep, and will convince the world that the security of ill-gotten wealth is no more substantial than a dream.

21. From the standpoint of his new enlightenment the psalmist looks back sadly on the folly of his doubts. He realises now how foolish he was to envy the success of the godless. The 'heart' and 'reins' are the seat of thought and emotion, respectively.

22, 23. In questioning God's Providence he had shown as much want of intelligence as if he were a mere brute beast.

24. This describes the loving care of God for the psalmist. Whatever may henceforth befall the psalmist, he will take it as part of God's fatherly plan in his regard. Even if sorrow and affliction come, the poet is confident that at last he will be received with honour by his Lord. This seems to be a clear reference to a setting right of things beyond the grave.

Thus the psalmist has learned two lessons from his experience and reflection; (*a*) the success of the wicked is but ephemeral, and (*b*) the ultimate glory and success of the just is secure. It is important to note that there is here no thought of life after death in a land of darkness remote from God like Sheol. The just will dwell in the very presence of God, sharing somehow in His glory.

25. The possession of God is the only true good. *A te*—'besides Thee,' or 'beyond Thee.'

26. Even though his body be nearing decay and death, the heart of the psalmist remains fixed in the Lord. Instead of *Deus cordis mei* the Hebrew has 'the Rock of my heart.' *Cf.* Introduction, p. xxxix. Jerome renders, *Robur cordis mei.*

27. A further repetition of the thought that the godless are doomed to failure. *Fornicari a Deo*=turn away from the service of God. The relation of Yahweh to Israel was often compared to that of a husband to his wife. When Israel turned away from Yahweh by idolatrous worship the prophets were wont to describe her conduct as fornication.

28. The true happiness of the psalmist is his nearness to God.

Praedicationes=themes of praise, *i.e.* the merciful deeds of Yahweh. The phrase *in portis filiae Sion* has crept in here from Ps. ix. 15.

PSALM LXXIII

THE DESECRATED SANCTUARY

THIS psalm refers clearly to a desecration, and at least partial destruction of the Temple. The Temple was devastated by the Pharaoh Sheshonk, about 976 B.C., and again in the time of Joram (beginning of ninth century); it was profaned by Joas of Israel in the time of Amazias (4 Kings, xiv). It was destroyed by Nabuchodonosor in 586, and during the persecution of Antiochus, it was desecrated and its gates were burned. It is to be noted that the psalm speaks of the silence of prophecy, so that it can scarcely refer to the destruction of the Temple by the Chaldeans, when Jeremias was energetically active. Theodore of Mopsuestia ascribed the psalm to the Maccabean period, taking it to be a complaint over the profanation of the Temple by Antiochus in 168 B.C. Modern Catholic scholars are inclined to take the same view. It is strongly defended by Schegg, and the most recent Catholic commentator on the Vulgate Psalter, Landesdorfer, holds that Ps. lxxiii is very probably a Maccabean psalm. Protestant Commentators in general accept the Maccabean date of the psalm.

The structure of the psalm is clear. It begins with a complaint and a prayer (1–3). The Sanctuary has been devastated, and God is asked to look upon the destruction which His enemies have made. The psalmist then goes on (vv. 4–11) to describe in vivid detail the ruthless work of the enemy in the Temple. We can hear the shouting of the foes as they break in to the Sanctuary; we see the setting up of their standards as tokens of victory and power; we see them hewing down the decorations of the Temple, destroying its beautiful walls and doors and their carved work with axes. Then we see the enemy, when his work of hewing and slashing is ended, preparing to set fire to the Temple. Even though the fire does not destroy the building completely, the Temple is, nevertheless, utterly profaned (even to the ground '). The fanaticism of the enemy extends beyond Jerusalem and synagogues are destroyed throughout the land. The psalmist laments almost despairingly (9–11); there is no hope, no message of better things; there is no longer a prophet in Israel, and signs of God's presence and favour are no more.

Yet (vv. 12–17) Yahweh is King of Israel, and so complaint passes over into confidence. Yahweh was of old the Leader of His people:

so will He be again. He has the power to be the Leader of Israel, for He is the Creator of the universe.

Renewed in confidence the psalmist breaks into tearful petition (18–23).

1. Intellectus Asaph.

Ut quid Deus repulisti in finem: iratus est furor tuus super oves pascuæ tuæ?

2. Memor esto congregationis tuæ, quam possedisti ab initio.

Redemisti virgam hæreditatis tuæ: mons Sion, in quo habitasti in eo.

3. Leva manus tuas in superbias eorum in finem: quanta malignatus est inimicus in sancto!

4. Et gloriati sunt qui oderunt te: in medio solemnitatis tuæ.

Posuerunt signa sua, signa:

5. Et non cognoverunt sicut in exitu super summum.

6. Quasi in silva lignorum securibus exciderunt januas ejus in idipsum: in securi et ascia dejecerunt eam.

7. Incenderunt igni sanctuarium tuum: in terra polluerunt tabernaculum nominis tui.

8. Dixerunt in corde suo cognatio eorum simul: Quiescere faciamus omnes dies festos Dei a terra.

9. Signa nostra non vidimus, jam non est propheta: et nos non cognoscet amplius.

10. Usquequo Deus improperabit inimicus: irritat adversarius nomen tuum in finem?

11. Ut quid avertis manum tuam, et dexteram tuam, de medio sinu tuo in finem?

12. Deus autem rex noster ante sæcula: operatus est salutem in medio terræ.

13. Tu confirmasti in virtute tua mare: contribulasti capita draconum in aquis.

1 A Maskil of Asaph

Why, O Lord, dost Thou utterly reject us?
Why burneth Thy wrath against the sheep of Thy pasture?

2. Take thought for Thy people
Which of old Thou didst purchase,
Didst acquire as Thine own possession;
Mount Sion it is whereon Thou dwellest.

3. Lift up Thy hands against their pride overweening;
What malice the foe hath wrought in the Holy Place!

4. They who hate Thee make their boast,
In the midst of Thy Shrine.
They have set up their standards as trophies—

5. For they have no insight—
Even over the entrance!

6. As in a forest, with axes they have shattered all its gates;
With axe and with hatchet they have hewn it down.

7. They have set fire to Thy sanctuary;
Even to the soil have they defiled the Tent of Thy Name.

8. They said in their hearts—the whole brood of them—
'Let us abolish from the land all the festivals of God!'

9. Our signs we see no more; there is no longer a prophet;
And He knoweth us no more!

10. How long, O God, shall Thy enemy mock?
How long shall the foe utterly blaspheme Thy name?

11. Why withdrawest Thou Thy hand—
Thy right hand from Thy bosom for ever?

12 Yet Thou, O God, art our King from of old,
Who workest deeds of rescue in the midst of the land.

13. In Thy power Thou didst establish the sea;
Thou didst shatter the heads of the dragons in the waters;

14. Tu confregisti capita draconis: dedisti eum escam populis Æthiopum.

15. Tu dirupisti fontes, et torrentes: tu siccasti fluvios Ethan.

16. Tuus est dies, et tua est nox: tu fabricatus es auroram et solem.

17. Tu fecisti omnes terminos terræ: æstatem et ver tu plasmasti ea.

14. Thou didst shatter the heads of the sea-monsters;
Didst give them as food to the beasts of the desert.

15. Fountains and brooks Thou madest to spring forth;
Didst dry up everflowing streams.

16. Thine is the day, Thine, too, is the night:
Thou didst fashion the dawn and the sun;

17. Thou hast fixed the boundaries of earth
Summer and winter—both Thou hast made.

18. Memor esto hujus, inimicus improperavit Domino: et populus insipiens incitavit nomen tuum.

19. Ne tradas bestiis animas confitentes tibi, et animas pauperum tuorum ne obliviscaris in finem.

20. Respice in testamentum tuum: quia repleti sunt, qui obscurati sunt terræ domibus iniquitatum.

21. Ne avertatur humilis factus confusus: pauper et inops laudabunt nomen tuum.

18. Give heed to this—The foe mocketh the Lord,
And a foolish people blasphemeth Thy Name.

19. Give not to the beasts the souls of Thy worshippers,
And forget not for ever the souls of Thy poor.

20. Look on Thy covenant,
For the oppressed of the Land are sated with misery.

21. Let not the poor shrink away disgraced:
The poor and the weak shall praise Thy Name.

22. Exsurge Deus, judica causam tuam: memor esto improperiorum tuorum, eorum quæ ab insipiente sunt tota die.

23. Ne obliviscaris voces inimicorum tuorum: superbia eorum, qui te oderunt, ascendit semper.

22. Arise then, O Lord, make defence of Thy cause.
Remember the mockings of Thee
Which fools pour forth daily.

23. Forget not the words of Thy foes;
The pride of Thy enemies ever increaseth.

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1. *Intellectus*; see Ps. xli. 1.

In finem='altogether.' *Cf.* Ps. xii. 1; lxxviii. 5; lxxxviii. 47.

Pascuae=the land of Israel. Why dost Thou reject the flock which has hitherto grazed on Thy pasture? The thought of Yahweh as Shepherd of Israel is frequent in the Old Testament.

2. 'Congregation' is the community of Israel as the Covenant-people of God. In virtue of the Sinaitic Covenant Israel was the special possession of the Lord.

Ab initio; from indefinitely ancient times—from of old *cf. Wisd.* ix. 8. Through the Covenant Yahweh acquired Israel as a *virga hæreditatis*, a measured and determined piece of property. *Virga* is a measuring-rod: it is here used for the land which was measured by the measuring-rod. The Hebrew word *shebhet* can mean both rod

and tribe, or nation. The latter meaning is more in place here, and we may take it that the true rendering of the Hebrew original ought to be *tribus* (*or natio*) *hæreditatis tua*.

Mons Sion : while the whole race of Israel is the object of Yahweh's special care, His interest is peculiarly centred in Mount Sion where His dwelling (the Temple) stands. As the purpose of the psalm is to make complaint over the desecration of the Temple, this reference to Mt. Sion at the outset is natural. The older Latin Psalters generally have *montem Sion*, putting it in apposition with *virgam* ; this view of the text is not excluded by the Hebrew.

3. The poet begins his prayer against those who have desecrated the Sanctuary.

Superbias in finem ; 'limitless pride.' The Hebrew has : 'Turn thy steps towards the eternal ruins (*mashshu'oth nesaḥ*).' Instead of *mashshu'oth*, which occurs only here and in the 18th verse of Ps. lxxii, the Greek translators read (as in lxxii. 18) *mas'oth*='lifting up,' and hence, 'pride.' Since it is not elsewhere clear that this psalm represents the Temple as reduced to ruins, the reading of the Greek (Latin) need not necessarily be corrected. Jerome's *Sublimitas pedum tuorum dissipata est usque ad finem* is one of the many passages of his rendering which are less helpful than the Vulgate.

In sancto, 'in the *Ḳodhesh*,'—the Sanctuary, or Temple in general.

4. It is not certain whether *sollemnitas* should be taken here as 'festival' (as if the enemy had broken into the Temple during some great festival), or as 'shrine.' The Hebrew word *mo'edh* can mean both the festive-gathering and the place where it assembles. Jerome has, *in medio pacti tui*.

Posuerunt, etc.: Jerome's rendering makes the sense clear : *Posuerunt signa sua in tropæum*. It would be fearful profanation in the eyes of a Jew to set heathen military standards in the precincts of the Temple. It would be a still greater profanation, of course, if there were question here, not of military standards, but of statues of heathen gods, or other emblems of heathen worship—like the 'abomination of desolation' which Antiochus set up upon the Altar (1 Macc. i. 54–64).

Et non cognoverunt . . . summum : this text is untranslatable as it stands. In the translation above it has been connected with the clause, *posuerunt signa sua signa* ; 'the trophies (or standards, or heathen emblems) they set up in their blind ignorance (*et non cognoverunt*) over the entrance' (*exitus* ought to be *introitus*). The *sicut* may be regarded as here pleonastic, for ὡς is sometimes used pleonastically in the Septuagint—especially with prepositions. *Super summum* means simply 'above.' The 'entrance' in question is not further defined ; but in the context it would seem to be a door or entrance of the Temple.

The Hebrew here is different, but it also is obscure. With slight

emendation the Hebrew text corresponding to *et non cognoverunt. . . securibus* could be rendered :

> Hacking (or, raging) like one that wields aloft
> Axes in a thicket of trees.

The contrast between the Hebrew and Vulgate texts here is not due to any great difference in the consonantal Hebrew text read by the Septuagint translators and that handed down by the Massoretes ; indeed the only peculiarity of the text read by the Septuagint translators was the presence therein of the negative. *Sicut in exitu* renders *k^e^mabho'*, while the Massoretes have *k^e^mebhi'*, ' like one that wields.' The *super summum* (' aloft ') obviously goes better with ' like one that wields ' than with *sicut in exitu*.

6. *Exciderunt* supposes a better Hebrew text than the Massoretic, but the Hebrew underlying *januas ejus*, viz., *p^e^thaḥeha*, is less likely than the Massoretic *pittuḥeha*, ' its carved work '—*sculpturas ejus*, as Jerome renders it. The enemy are depicted as hewing away the wood-work of the Temple as the woodman hews down the trees in the forest. *Cf.* what is said of Antiochus in 1 Macc. i. 21*f* ; ' And in his arrogance he entered into the sanctuary, and took the golden altar, and the candlestick for the light, and all its accessories, and the table of the showbread, and the cups, and the bowls, and the golden censers, and the veil and the crowns, and the golden adornment of the façade of the Temple, and he scaled it off. Moreover, he took the silver and the gold, and the choice vessels ; he also took the hidden treasures which he found.' When Judas went up to Mt. Sion to re-dedicate the Holy Place, he found ' the sanctuary laid desolate, and the altar profaned, and the gates burned up, and shrubs growing in the courts as in a forest, or upon one of the mountains, and the chambers pulled down ' (1 Macc. iv. 38). *Cf.* 2 Macc. i. 8 ; viii. 33.

In idipsum=completely.

7. *Incenderunt*, etc.; ' they set on fire,' not, ' they destroyed with fire.' It is not said that the Temple was completely destroyed. The profanation *in terram* does not imply that the Temple was razed to the ground, but that its defilement was complete.

8. *Cognatio*, brood, race. *Quiescere faciamus* ought to mean, ' Let us prevent the celebration of the feasts of Yahweh in the land.' This was the policy of Antiochus. *Cf.* 1 Macc. i. 44*f.* : ' The king sent letters . . . to Jerusalem and to the cities of Juda that they should practise customs foreign to the land, and that they should cease the sacrificing of whole burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and drink offerings in the sanctuary, and that they should profane the sabbaths and feasts, and pollute the sanctuary and those who had been sanctified.' The Massoretic text, however, speaks of the burning by the foe of the *mo'^a^dhe 'El*. *Mo'^a^dhe 'El* could, in itself, mean festivals of God, but in connection with *burning* it must mean rather

gathering-places, or synagogues, of God. Jerome renders *Incenderunt omnes solemnitates Dei in terra.* But we must either render *mo'ᵃdhe 'El* as 'synagogues' (as do Aquila and Symmachus), or we must change 'burn' into something else. It is possible that a primitive *κατακαύσωμεν* in the Septuagint has been changed into *καταπαύσωμεν*. A reference to synagogues here would put the psalm definitely in the later post-Exilic period.

9. *Signa*; the reference may be to portents of God's power such as were seen in the olden days, but the 'signs' may be, on the other hand, such tokens of God's presence as the adornment of the Temple, and the festive and ordinary cult in the Temple. Some commentators find here a reference to the observance of the Sabbath and circumcision—as signs of the continuance of the Covenant. *Cf.* 1 Macc. i. 61).

'There is no prophet' points, like the synagogues, to a late period of Hebrew history. Note how, when Judas pulled down the old altar of holocausts, the stones thereof were put away in the mountain of the House, in a convenient place, until a prophet should come and decide concerning them (1 Macc. iv. 46). Here there is the same idea of the absence of prophecy as in our Psalm.

Et nos non cognoscet amplius: the subject is either God—the failure of Israel being a token of His indifference, or it may be the indefinite subject 'one'—there is none that knows us (since they are no longer marked off in any special way as favourites of God). The Hebrew is here better; 'And there is no one among us who knoweth how long'—no prophet, that is, who can tell them how long their troubles will last.

Irritat; the Hebrew has *na'aṣ*, 'spurn,' 'contemn.'

11. The Vulgate must be understood, apparently, as implying that God has hitherto carried Israel—as a child is carried—in His bosom, supporting the burden with His right hand (*cf.* Num. xi. 12; Is. xl. 11). If God withdraws His right hand from His bosom, Israel must fall helplessly to the ground. The Hebrew text suggests rather the thought that God, instead of stretching out a helping right hand to Israel, is keeping the hand hidden in the folds of His garment.

12. And yet God who leaves Israel to her doom is the same mighty God who worked wonders for Israel in the sight of all men (*in medio terrae*) in the olden days: He is indeed the King of Israel since the earliest times (*ante sæcula*).

13. The reference is to the crossing of the Red Sea. The Hebrew has, 'Thou didst cleave' (*porarta*). The Septuagint renders 'Thou didst master,' and the Latin *confirmasti* seems to be a rendering of *ἐκραταίωσας*. Taking the Vulgate by itself we could refer *confirmasti* to the building up of the walls of water between which the Israelites marched across the bed of the sea. *Cf.* Exod. xiv. 21*f*.

14. The *dracones* are usually explained as crocodiles, which, when

swimming, could be smitten on the head. The smiting of the crocodiles has further been understood of the defeat of the Egyptians at the Exodus. Yet it is probably better to find in the destruction of the *dracones* a reference to the overthrow of the primeval monster of Chaos. *Cf*. Is. li. 9 ; Job, vii. 12 ; ix. 13 ; xxvi. 12.

The *populi Ethiopum* are not the Ethiopians, but 'folk of the desert-dwellers,' *i.e.* jackals. *Cf*. Ps. lxxi. 9.

15. The *fontes* and *torrentes* recall the instances of miraculous provision of water for the Israelites in their desert-wanderings.

Fluvios Ethan ; Ethan is here simply the Hebrew epithet *'ethan*= 'perpetual,' 'everflowing,' an epithet of streams which flowed in summer as well as in winter. Such a stream, of course, was the Jordan, and yet it was dried up to enable the Israelites to cross. Indeed, the Israelites crossed the Jordan when it was in fullest spring-time flood.

16–17. Yahweh whom the enemies despise is the Lord of nature, and the Creator of the universe. Instead of *auroram et solem* the Septuagint has 'the sun and moon' ; the Hebrew has 'the light and the sun,' and Jerome *luminaria et solem*.

18. The *hujus* may refer either to the foregoing ('Remember all this'), or to the following—the insolence of Israel's foes. The enemies are foolish, as their attitude shows. *Cf*. Ps. xiii. 1. *Incitavit*, 'despises,' 'scorns'—like *irritat* in verse 10 above.

19. The wild beasts are the foes. Instead of *animas confitentes tibi* the Hebrew has 'the soul of thy dove.' The dove is, of course, loyal Israel. The versions have generally misunderstood or misread the Hebrew *torekha*, 'thy dove.' The Sept. translators read *todhekha* (from *yadah*, hence *confitentes*). Jerome connected *torekha* with *torah* (Law) and rendered ; *animam eruditam lege tua*. The *pauperes* are the same as the *confitentes*—the loyal worshippers of Yahweh in Israel.

20. Yahweh is asked to remember the Covenant by which He bound Himself to become the protecting God of Israel.

Quia repleti . . . iniquitatem is quite hopeless as it stands in the Vulgate. Jerome's rendering is better :

Respice ad pactum ;
quia repletae sunt tenebris terrae,
habitationes iniquae subrutae.

The Massoretic text is not much less obscure than the Vulgate. It reads (slightly emended) :

Look on thy covenant !
The dark-places of earth are full of dwellings of violence.

The thought of the passage seems to be that the actual situation of Israel is out of harmony with the Covenant between Yahweh and His people.

21. The *humilis*, *pauper*, and *inops*—are all the same, the *confitentes* of v. 19.

22. Since Yahweh is the covenant-God of Israel, the defeat of Israel is a disgrace to Yahweh. Let Him arise, then, and defend His own cause, and avenge Himself against the fools who despise His name.

23. The fools grow louder and bolder in their contempt for Israel's God in proportion as they are left unpunished.

PSALM LXXIV

THE JUDGE AND THE CUP OF HIS WRATH

IT is possible that verse 2 points to a particular historical occasion of this psalm; if it does we cannot identify that occasion. Since, however, verses 3–9 resemble the eschatological psalm ii, it is possible that the main reference of this psalm is not to any definite historical incident, but to the Messianic judgment against mockers who will not believe that a Day of the Lord, a Day of Judgment, is coming. The psalmist is convinced either that Yahweh has justified, or is about to justify, His worshippers, or that the worshippers of the Lord will ultimately be set right in the eyes of all. Perhaps the best view of the origin of the psalm is that some recent act of divine favour towards Israel, possibly the rescue of Jerusalem from Sanherib's army, inspired the psalmist to assert his confidence that not merely now, but always in due time (and therefore especially in the Messianic age), God intervenes in men's affairs to show that He is, in truth, the support of the just, and the Ruler of the world. It is the chief concern of the psalmist to convince the sinners, who appear here as foes of Israel, that Yahweh does, in fact, guide the world.

The psalm does not begin with the usual summons to join in a song of praise. We are set at once, as it were, in the midst of a service of praise. A multitude of worshippers have assembled, and make the wondrous doings of God the theme of their song. In verses 3 and 4 Yahweh addresses the world. Men may fancy that, because the judgment of the Lord is withheld, the Day of the Lord will never come. But the due time of the Lord always comes, and however injustice seems to prevail, the Lord will, in His own good time, overthrow it, and save from its thraldom the world. *Cf.* Is. v. 19; Habac. ii. 3.

In verses 5 and 6 the psalmist warns the impious (as in Ps. ii) against the folly of doubting that Yahweh rules the world—a folly like that of the ox, or the bison, that would threaten heaven with its horns.

In verses 7–9 we have a description of the Judge and the cup of His wrath. We have here the same picture as in Is. li. 17; Jer. xxv. 15; Ez. xxiii. 33; Ps. lix. 5. The sinners are doomed to drink of the cup of God's anger. The wine in the cup is unmixed with water, but it is mixed with ingredients which have an intoxicating and maddening effect. The godless must empty the cup to the dregs.

Nothing like this can be brought about by men—by conquerors from east or west, south or north. God alone exercises judgment.

The psalmist, like every true worshipper of Yahweh, will rejoice when the godless are brought to naught, and he will for ever praise the Lord. But he will do more—for he himself will seek to break the might of the godless. Thus he speaks as a king, or leader, of the people.

1. In finem, Ne corrumpas, Psalmus Cantici Asaph.

2. Confitebimur tibi Deus: confitebimur, et invocabimus nomen tuum.
Narrabimus mirabilia tua:
3. Cum accepero tempus, ego justitias judicabo.
4. Liquefacta est terra, et omnes qui habitant in ea: ego confirmavi columnas ejus.

5. Dixi iniquis: Nolite inique agere: et delinquentibus: Nolite exaltare cornu:
6. Nolite extollere in altum cornu vestrum: nolite loqui adversus Deum iniquitatem.
7. Quia neque ab Oriente, neque ab Occidente, neque a desertis montibus:
8. Quoniam Deus judex est.
Hunc humiliat, et hunc exaltat:
9. Quia calix in manu Domini vini meri plenus misto.
Et inclinavit ex hoc in hoc: verumtamen fæx ejus non est exinanita: bibent omnes peccatores terræ.
10. Ego autem annuntiabo in sæculum: cantabo Deo Jacob.
11. Et omnia cornua peccatorum confringam: et exaltabuntur cornua justi.

1. For the choir-leader. 'Destroy not.' An Asaphite Psalm.

2. We praise Thee, O Lord; we praise Thee;
We call on Thy name, and proclaim Thy wonders.

3. When I see the fit time
I will hold just trial.
4. Even if earth should melt away, and all its dwellers,
Yet I hold firm its pillars.

5. To the godless I say: Act not godlessly;
To the impious: Uplift not the horn!

6. Uplift not against the Highest your horn;
Speak not insolence against God!

7. For neither from east nor from west,
Nor from the lonely hills—

8. It is God who is Judge;
He humbleth one and exalteth another.

9. For in the Lord's hand is a cup
Of pure wine, full of wine well-mixed;
He poureth therefrom all around;
But the lees are not finished;
All the sinners of earth shall drink them.
10. But I will exult for ever;
I will hymn to the God of Jacob.
11. And I will break all the horns of sinners;
But the horns of the just shall be high.

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1. *Ne Corrumpas*; these may be the first words of the song according to the melody of which the psalm was to be sung. It is possible, however, that the Hebrew ought to be read *'al tashḥeth* rather than *'al tashḥeth*, so that the whole title might mean, 'For the choir-master in charge of the group of singers called *Tashḥeth*' (the name *Tashḥeth* being probably a corruption). *Cf.* Ps. lvi. 1.

Psalmus cantici; *cf.* Ps. xxix, xlvii, lxvi, lxvii, lxxxvi, xci.

Confitebimur-confitebimur-narrabimus imply a better text than the Massoretic. The praise of God's name in question is on account

of some special act of divine favour recently performed or confidently expected. That act has been variously identified with the overthrow of Sanherib's host, with the first victories of the Maccabean period, and with the judgment of the Messianic time. Many features of the psalm favour the view that it bears some reference to the delivery of Jerusalem from Sanherib (*cf.* Is. xxxvi. 13*ff.*; xxxvii. 10*ff.*). The proud insolence of the enemies of Yahweh and of Israel here described would fit well into the general context of 4 Kings xix, and of Is. xxxvi, xxxvii. See also Is. x and xiv.

3. Yahweh speaks. The 'time' is the due point of time which Yahweh knows because He has fixed it. *Accepero* is to be understood of seizing or grasping *mentally*: when (or, whenever) Yahweh sees that the time for action is come, He intervenes and gives just judgment. The judgment will be, of course, in favour of Israel, and will confound the enemies of Israel. The psalmist apparently believes that the time is come for the intervention of the Lord in the affairs of His people. It is probably easier to understand the psalm as looking forward to an energetic intervention and to a judgment about to take place (or, in the psalmist's opinion, *due* to take place) than to suppose that it is a hymn of thanks for a favour recently received.

4. *Liquefacta est, etc.*; even though, to the eyes of men, the whole fabric of things seems to be on the point of breaking up, yet so long as God's hand sustains the world (supports its 'pillars'), its utter destruction is impossible. Or the sense may be: Even though the world and its dwellers should tend to wither away in fear before the coming judgment of the Lord, He will conserve them, for the end is not yet. Or the sense may be: Even though the world should tend to dissolve through fear and dismay because of the injustice which everywhere prevails, yet God has provided that the foundation of earth—which is justice—shall not fail.

5–6. These are words of the psalmist. He warns the enemies of Yahweh to desist from their mad impiety (*cf.* Ps. ii. 10*ff.*). 'To raise the horn'=to be proud and haughty. The idea of preparing for attack is also present in the phrase.

The foes of Yahweh and Israel are like bisons which, in the pride of their strength, toss high their heads, and threaten with their horns. *Cf.* Deut. xxxiii. 17.

In *altum*, against God. In the Hebrew *marom* (=the 'Height') is used (like 'heaven') as a designation of God.

Adversus Deum: the (correct) Hebrew text has here, 'against the Rock,' *i.e.* against Yahweh, the Rock of Israel. *Cf.* Is. xxx. 29; Deut. xxxii. 4, 37; Habacuc i. 12; iii. 13.

Iniquitatem: in Hebrew *'athaḥ*, 'insolence.'

7–8. Israel will be avenged against the insolent foes of Yahweh; but she will not be avenged by any help of man, or merely natural

powers, coming from any quarter of earth. Her Helper and Avenger is Yahweh alone, and Him only may she trust.

A desertis montibus: commentators usually identify 'the desert hills' with the mountainous desert south of Palestine. On this view the north is not mentioned among the districts from which Israel may not expect help. The omission of the north is generally explained as due to the circumstance that, as the enemies against whom Israel is to be defended are the Assyrians of the north, no help would be looked to from that quarter. It is not unlikely, however, that the original text read: 'From the desert and from the mountains,' *i.e.* from the south and the north. The meaning of that reading would be the obvious one that no help was to be looked for from any earthly source. This point of view is thoroughly Isaian, for Isaias warned constantly against the danger for Jerusalem of alliances with foreign powers. It has been conjectured that Isaias composed this psalm.

Since no subject is supplied for the sentence, we can insert, 'cometh help,' or something similar.

9. The Lord is represented as giving to the nations to drink of the cup of His wrath. See the note on Ps. lix. 5; and note the parallels there quoted. The wine is the symbol of Yahweh's judgment, or of the punishment which it decrees. The Hebrew is here somewhat different from the Vulgate. The cup which the Lord holds in His hand is filled with *vinum merum, i.e.* wine undiluted with water, and therefore potent in its effects. Further, the cup is *plenus misto*—full of spiced wine. The sense is; not merely is the cup which the Lord ministers to His foes strong, like undiluted wine, but it is strengthened in its intoxicating ('staggering') potency, as wine is strengthened, by the addition of ingredients such as myrrh, nard, etc.; it is a cup of *vinum compunctionis* (Ps. lix. 5), a 'cup of staggering' (Is. li. 22).

The general situation here is the same as in Jer. xxv. 15*ff*, where all have to drink of the wine of punishment, and the greatest sinners have to drink the lees.

There is no real contradiction here between *merum* and *mistum* (*cf.* Greek: οἴνου ἀκράτου πλῆρες κεράσματος, 'full of the mixture of undiluted wine): ἄκρατος (*merum, meracum*) means unmixed with water, and κέρασμα (*mistum*) is the product of the mixture of pure wine with pungent ingredients of various kinds. In the Vulgate *plenus* must be taken with *calix*. In the Hebrew it is the wine which is called mixed (see the translation of the Hebrew in note on Ps. lix. 5).

Ex hoc in hoc: this phrase has led some commentators to find here two cups, one filled with undiluted wine (symbolising the goodness of God), and another *plenus misto* (symbolising God's justice). But there is no real ground for such a view. *In hoc* cannot refer to the *calix*, and we cannot suppose, therefore, that the words imply that God pours the wine from one cup into another. The *in hoc* has

nothing corresponding to it in the Massoretic text, and it is possible that it has crept in here from Ps. clxiii. 13. As it stands, the Latin *ex hoc in hoc* is best understood adverbially, as='one after another,' or, 'to all in turn,' or 'all around.'

Inclinavit—used of the tilting of the cup.

Verumtamen faex, etc.; though many sinners have drunk of the cup, it is not yet empty. The lees are reserved for the present enemies of Yahweh.

Jerome renders verse 9:

Quia calix in manu Domini est,
et vino meraco usque ad plenum mixtus,
et propinabit ex eo:
verum tamen fæces ejus epotabunt bibentes
omnes impii terræ.

10. *Annunciabo* ought to be (as in *Psalterium Romanum*) *gaudebo*. *Cf.* Greek, ἀγαλλιάσομαι.

11. For the breaking of the horns, *cf.* Zach. i. 21. If the psalmist is here speaking in his own name, and not in that of the community, he must be regarded as a king or leader in Israel.

PSALM LXXV

THANKSGIVING FOR VICTORY

THIS psalm has points of close contact with Psalms xlv and xlvii. The *Ad Assyrios* of the title shows that an early tradition associated it with the attack of Sanherib on Jerusalem (4 Kings xix. 35 ; Is. xxxvii. 36). But, as in Isaias, so also here, the attack of Sanherib is depicted, to some extent, in the colours of the Messianic Judgment against the foes of the Messias. Hence, while the psalm is primarily a song of thanks for the delivery of Sion from Sanherib, it is at the same time, a song of thanksgiving, as it were, for the dawning of the Messianic Era (See verses 3, 9, 12). The conclusion of the poem describes the overthrow of despotism, and the union of all peoples and princes in the service of Yahweh (the overthrow of the proud army of Assyria being a token and pledge, and partial realisation of this). The predicate ' fearful ' given four times in the (true text of the) poem to Yahweh suggests how bitter has been the experience of foreign rule in Israel : what the foreigners have been to Israel, God will be to them.

2–4. In *Shalem* the Lord has set up His tent. The name *Shalem* (*cf.* Gen. xiv) is symbolic : the city was to be a city of peace (*shalom*), and hence a meet centre of the Messianic Kingdom of Peace. When the weapons of war are broken, the reign of peace begins—as it is said in Ps. xlv. 10 : ' Wars He maketh to cease throughout the world : He breaketh the bow and shattereth weapons, and shields He burneth with fire ' (See note on Ps. xlv. 10, and parallels there quoted). As Sion is to be the centre of the Messianic reign of peace, so now, when Sanherib has been defeated, Sion becomes again the undoubted dwelling of God, as it will be His sacred home after the close of the Messianic battles (*cf.* Ps. xlv. 5). As Sanherib has been overthrown before the gates of *Shalem*, so the last decisive battles of the final period will be fought before the gates of Jerusalem (Ps. xlv. 4.)

5–7. Here the decisive overthrow of the Assyrian is described—but again in partly Messianic fashion. As the mere chiding of Yahweh suffices to overthrow His enemies, the Assyrians, so will the foes of the Messianic age, who gather to attack Jerusalem (*cf.* Ps. ii), be vanquished by the chiding of the Lord. The poet describes in detail the effect on the enemy of the flashing splendours in which Yahweh comes to defend His dwelling. In thunder and lightning He comes, and at His approach the enemy are petrified with fear.

8–11. The judgment on the Assyrians passes over, in the mind of the poet, into the world-judgment of the Messianic time. The weak and oppressed receive justice. At the very upstanding of God unto judgment the earth trembles, and the tumult of God's foes is silenced—until they also at last burst into songs of praise.

12–13. The psalmist exhorts Israel and the nations to give praise to the Lord for the salvation of Israel (*cf.* Ps. ii, and xlv. 11). The proud rulers of earth will make humble submission to Yahweh, and the rule of Messianic peace and justice will take the place of despotism. Thus the overthrow of Sanherib is not a mere incident in the military history of Israel: it is an anticipation, a partial rehearsal, of the great events of the Messianic age.

1. In finem, in Laudibus, Psalmus Asaph, Canticum ad Assyrios.
2. Notus in Judæa Deus: in Israel magnum nomen ejus.
3. Et factus est in pace locus ejus: et habitatio ejus in Sion.
4. Ibi confregit potentias arcuum, scutum, gladium, et bellum.

1. For the choir-master: on stringed instruments: an Asaphite Psalm: a psalm concerning the Assyrians.
2. Well known is God in Judæa,
In Israel great is His name:
3. In Peace hath His place been set,
And in Sion His dwelling.
4. There broke He the mighty bows,
Shield, sword (all the weapons of) war.

5. Illuminans tu mirabiliter a montibus æternis:
6. Turbati sunt omnes insipientes corde.
Dormierunt somnum suum: et nihil invenerunt omnes viri divitiarum in manibus suis.
7. Ab increpatione tua Deus Jacob dormitaverunt qui ascenderunt equos.

5. Wondrously flashed Thy light from the eternal hills;
6. Dismayed were all the foolish of heart;
They slept their death-sleep;
Not one of all the proud warriors found aught of his strength;
7. At Thy chiding, O God of Jacob, the riders sank into sleep.

8. Tu terribilis es, et quis resistet tibi? ex tunc ira tua.

8. Fearful art Thou! Who shall withstand Thee
In the hour of Thy wrath?

9. De cœlo auditum fecisti judicium: terra tremuit et quievit.
10. Cum exsurgeret in judicium Deus, ut salvos faceret omnes mansuetos terræ.

9. From heaven Thou proclaimest judgment;
The earth trembleth, and is silent,
10. When God ariseth unto judgment,
To save all the meek ones of earth.

11. Quoniam cogitatio hominis confitebitur tibi: et reliquiæ cogitationis diem festum agent tibi.
12. Vovete, et reddite Domino Deo vestro: omnes qui in circuitu ejus affertis munera.

11. Hence evil-plotting men must praise Thee,
And the rest of the plotters make festival for Thee.
12. Make ye vows, and fulfil them, to the Lord your God;
All ye dwellers round about bring gifts to the Dread One,

13. Terribili et ei qui aufert spiritum principum, terribili apud reges terræ.

13. To Him Who destroyeth the pride of princes,
To Him Who is dreaded by the kings of earth.

1. *In laudibus,* with stringed instruments. *Cf. In carminibus,* Ps. iv, vi, liv, and *In hymnis,* Ps. lx and lxvi.

Ad Assyrios, in regard to the Assyrians. This determination of the psalm is not found in the Hebrew. The reference is obviously to the Assyrian advance against Jerusalem under Sanherib in the reign of Ezechias. See 4 Kings xix. 35 and Is. xxxvii, xxxvi.

2. *Notus in Judæa . . . in Israel* ; Judæa (Judah) and Israel= all the land of the Hebrews. When Sanherib marched against Jerusalem, Israel (the northern kingdom) had ceased to exist, Samaria having fallen in B.C. 722. But in olden days Yahweh had wrought wondrous deeds of deliverance in North and South.

3. The might of Yahweh has been shown above all in the South, for in the South, in the city of Shalem, on Mt. Sion, was His tent (*locus*), His own special dwelling. As the chosen abode of the Lord Jerusalem must remain inviolate. In Jerusalem, therefore, must be chiefly visible the protecting power of the God of Israel.

In pace ; the Hebrew has *in Shalem,* and the parallelism of the verse makes it clear that Shalem is Jerusalem. The name Jerusalem was, apparently, explained as meaning ' City of Peace ' (*cf.* Gen. xiv. 18 and Hebrews vii. 1*ff.*). A City of Peace must necessarily remain safe from attack. Moreover as the dwelling of the Holy One of Israel, the peace of Sion must forever remain secure. This was a central point in the protest of Isaias against alliances of Judah with foreign powers. The Septuagint translators equated Shalem with *shalom,* peace. By printing *pace* as a proper name—*Pace,* the Vulgate can be made to convey the real sense of the verse.

Locus is a translation of the Hebrew *sokh,* tent.

4. In the defence of His dwelling on Sion the Lord has overwhelmed His foes. Traditional exegesis finds here a description of the overthrow of Sanherib's army (Is. xxxvii. 35, 36).

Potentias arcuum=the mighty bows : Hebrew, ' the flames (or lightnings) of the bows.' The speed of the arrows is compared to that of lightning. The rendering in the *Psalterium Romanum, cornua arcuum* is probably due to the misreading of the Septuagint κράτη as κέρατα.

Bellum means here not war in general, but the war-equipment of the enemy.

5. *Illuminans, etc.* The general sense of this difficult verse is clear enough. It is a description of the action by which Yahweh dismayed and overthrew His foes, and, like other Biblical accounts of the appearances of the Lord of Hosts, it contains a reference to lightnings and a thunder-storm. Amid thunder, and lightnings and hail, etc., the God of Israel was wont to come to the rescue of His people (*cf.* Judges v. 4 and Ps. xvii. 8–16), and so He comes to rescue Jerusalem. This does not appear in Isaias' narrative of the destruction of the army of Sanherib ; but that narrative is incomplete, and,

moreover, a certain freedom of poetic imagery must be permitted to the author of this psalm.

The text both of the versions and of the Massoretes is unsatisfactory. The Hebrew has: 'Fearful (reading *nora'*) art Thou, Majestic One, from the hills of booty.' The word for booty is probably a false gloss on the word which originally stood in the text—*'adh,* a word which could mean either 'booty' or 'eternity.' Hence we may render the Hebrew (corrected) text; 'from the eternal hills,' as in Greek and Vulgate. *Illuminans* represents a Hebrew *me'ir,* (instead of the Massoretic *na'or,* or, as corrected in the translation just given, *nora'*='fearful'). The flashing forth is the coming of Yahweh in a storm of thunder and lightning. Since the mountains seem to reach to the heavens, the lightnings are thought of as coming from the clouds; and since the mountains, in comparison with human things and the various objects of nature around them, are immovable and unchangeable, they are called eternal. The particular mountains here spoken of may be the hills on which Jerusalem stands. It would be particularly appropriate if Yahweh came forth with His lightnings from the hills which were the object of his foes' attack. The expression 'eternal mountains' (*har^e^re 'adh*), paralleled by everlasting hills (*gibh'oth 'olam*) occurs in Habacuc iii. 6. *Mirabiliter* renders the Hebrew *'addir,* 'Majestic One.'

6. The appearance af the fearful glory of God in the storm dismayed the foes who were marching against Shalem. As the Hebrew puts it:

> 'Stout men became mere booty, and slept the death-sleep;
> No proud warrior could find his strength.
> At Thy chiding O God of Jacob, benumbed were chariot and steed.'

Insipientes corde; the Hebrew *'abbire lebh,* 'stout-hearted,' was read by the Septuagint translators *'obh^e^dhe lebh,* 'lost (or, 'straying') of heart': or it may be that the 'strength of heart' of the enemies of Yahweh was taken by the translators as=madness, or folly, since it would be madness or folly to attack the dwelling of the Most High (as if they had taken *præditi corde* as a sarcasm for *perditi corde*). The 'sleep' is the sleep of death.

Instead of *in manibus* we ought to have, according to the Hebrew, *manus suas* as object to *invenerunt*; instead of *nihil* we should have *non. Invenire manus*=to find one's strength, to find that one has strength at one's disposal. In presence of the flashing forth of Yahweh's greatness they became, as it were, paralysed. The *viri divitiarum* are the *'anshe ḥayil,* 'the warriors,' of the Hebrew text. The Vulgate text can be made to bear an intelligible meaning as it stands by taking *viri divitiarum* as='men of power,' and rendering; 'The men of power found no strength (*nihil*) in their hands.' Jerome renders: *Et non invenerunt omnes viri exercitus manus suas.*

7. The 'chiding' is the threatening implied in the theophany. Possibly God's voice in the thunder is the special chiding to which the psalmist refers. At that chiding the enemy horsemen and those who manned the war-chariots were dismayed and benumbed (*dormitaverunt*) with fear and terror. The Hebrew *nirdam w^erekhebh wasus*, 'benumbed were chariot and steed,' was read by the translators, *nird^emu rokh^ebhe sus*. The 'chariot' and 'steed' of the Hebrew are used by metonymy for the warriors who guided them.

8. Truly Yahweh is fearful and irresistible.

Ex tunc ira tua: *ex tunc* renders Hebrew *me'az*, 'since' ('whenever'): 'Who can withstand Thee when Thy anger has burst forth?'

9. The judgment is Yahweh's intervention on behalf of His people, and His overthrow of the enemy. Here the judgment is spoken of as coming from heaven; in verse 5 it is described as coming from the eternal hills (*cf.* note on 5). The trembling of earth suggests the idea of an earthquake: for a Hebrew poet an earthquake was part of the full grandeur of a theophany. The Hebrew verb which is translated *tremuit* does not, however, bear any reference to earthquake, but the verb *shaḳaṭ*, which is here rendered *quievit*, is often used for the subsidence of earth after an earthquake-shock.

10. The *mansuetos terræ=humiles terræ*—the loyal worshippers of Yahweh.

11. This is a very difficult verse in the Vulgate. The Massoretic text reads:

> 'For the violence of men (=the fiercest men) will praise Thee;
> The rest of Thy wrath Thou withholdest.'

The violence of men, *ḥ^amath 'adham*, is rendered in the Greek ἐνθύμιον ἀνθρώπου (as if ἐνθύμιον were θυμός), and ἐνθύμιον appears in the Vulgate as *cogitatio*. Hence *cogitatio* must be taken as meaning something like evil-planning (or, plotters of evil). In the second half of the verse *ḥemoth*, 'outbursts of anger' (Prov. xxii. 24) is rendered also ἐνθυμίου—whence *cogitationis* in the Latin. Thus the 'remnants of thought' ought to be the 'remnants of anger' (or of evil planning, *i.e.* the remnants of the plotters of evil). Instead of the Hebrew *taḥgor* the Septuagint writers read *t^eḥoggekha* (that is, instead of the Massoretic *tḥgr*, 'thou wilt restrain,' the Hebrew read by the translators was *tḥgk*, 'will make Thee festival'). In the parallelism the Greek (Latin), 'will make festival for Thee' is better than the Massoretic text. The sense is then:

> 'The violent (or, evil-planning)=*cogitatio hominis* shall praise Thee,
> The remnant of the violent shall make festival for Thee.' [1]

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[1] It is possible that there is an echo in verse 11 of Zachary xiv, 16: 'And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship . . . and to keep

The Assyrian army in general may be taken to be the 'violent'; the 'remnant of violence' is, then, the portion of the Assyrian army which escaped the destroying hand of God's angel. The proud army which had advanced to assault the dwelling of the Holy One of Israel is compelled to acknowledge the greatness of Yahweh and to pay Him homage. The Messianic colouring of this and the preceding verses has been pointed out in the introduction to this psalm.

12. Israel must offer thanks for her rescue. The heathen peoples, too, who dwell round about Israel are invited to join in the thanksgiving for Israel's safety. This universalism is part of the Messianic outlook.

13. *Aufert*; Hebrew, *baṣar*, 'cut away completely.' '*Spiritum*' =pride. *Apud reges=regibus.* Yahweh is *terribilis*=the dread God who tolerates no opposition to His power.

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the feast of Tabernacles.' 'Keep festival for Thee' may mean keep the Ḥag—*the* Feast (Tabernacles) for Thee. See Thackeray, The Septuagint and Jewish Worship. (Milford, 1921) p. 71*f*.

Some commentators have proposed to emend

ḥ^amath 'adham todhekka	The violence of man shall praise Thee:
Sh^e'erith ḥemoth taḥgor	The remnant of anger Thou wilt restrain,

into

Ḥ^amath 'Aram todhekka	Emath of Aram shall praise Thee;
Sh^e'erith Ḥ^amath i^eḥoggekka.	And the rest of Emath shall make festival for Thee.

The 'rest of Emath' is explained as the remnant of the defeated army of Hamath which recognises the power of Yahweh in its defeat. Emath (=Hamath) was the capital of an Aramean kingdom; it was situated on the Orontes.

PSALM LXXVI

THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

IN a time of great national need the psalmist asks himself how the sad lot of his people is to be reconciled with the Covenant, and with the great promises of God to his fathers.

2–5. In his grief at the fate of his people he cries out to God in supplication, and stretches out his hands in prayer even in the night time. He is so troubled that he cannot sleep, for his soul finds no comfort. He cannot even properly voice his doubts and his fears.

6–11. Yet though he keeps silence his mind is at work. He recalls the proud past of Israel, and, as he looks back on the gracious deeds of Yahweh in the olden days, the problems of the present become all the more insoluble. Once the Lord was the Leader of Israel, and promised her His favour for ever. Yet now, where is His favour? What has become of His promises? Surely the truth is that God has changed; that His right hand is no more, as it was wont to be, the powerful stay of Israel.

12–16. Yet things cannot remain as they are. In the glorious days of the Exodus, God did His most wondrous deeds for His people, astonishing the heathens by His power, and revealing Himself clearly to the world as the God of Israel—the God of the Covenant. But the Covenant cannot be undone: Yahweh is still the God of Israel, and cannot abandon her to destruction.

17–21. Since this is so the psalmist bursts out into a hymn like that of Exod. xv and Habacuc (ch. iii). The waters of the Red Sea are personified, and the appearance of God at the Exodus is described after the fashion of Ps. xvii. 11*ff*. Yahweh comes amid thunders and lightnings—the crashing of His chariot wheels, and the flashing arrows of his lightnings, and earthquake. Between the mountains of waves He marches with His people who are led by Moses and Aaron, and follow Him with that confidence with which the flock follows its shepherd.

1. In finem, pro Idithun, Psalmus Asaph.

2. Voce mea ad Dominum clamavi: voce mea ad Deum, et intendit mihi.

1. For the choir-master of the Yedithun singers: an Asaphite Psalm.

2. Loud will I cry to the Lord,
Loud unto God, and He will hear me.

3. In die tribulationis meæ Deum exquisivi, manibus meis nocte contra eum : et non sum deceptus.

Renuit consolari anima mea,
4. Memor fui Dei, et delectatus sum, et exercitatus sum : et defecit spiritus meus.
5. Anticipaverunt vigilias oculi mei : turbatus sum, et non sum locutus.

6 Cogitavi dies antiquos : et annos æternos in mente habui.
7. Et meditatus sum nocte cum corde meo, et exercitabar, et scopebam spiritum meum.
8. Numquid in æternum projiciet Deus : aut non apponet ut complacitior sit adhuc ?
9. Aut in finem misericordiam suam abscindet, a generatione in generationem ?
10. Aut obliviscetur misereri Deus ? aut continebit in ira sua misericordias suas ?
11. Et dixi : Nunc cœpi : hæc mutatio dexteræ Excelsi.

12. Memor fui operum Domini : quia memor ero ab initio mirabilium tuorum,
13. Et meditabor in omnibus operibus tuis : et in adinventionibus tuis exercebor.
14. Deus in sancto via tua : quis Deus magnus sicut Deus noster ?
15. Tu es Deus qui facis mirabilia.
Notam fecisti in populis virtutem tuam :
16. Redemisti in brachio tuo populum tuum, filios Jacob, et Joseph.
17. Viderunt te aquæ Deus, viderunt te aquæ : et timuerunt, et turbatæ sunt abyssi.
18. Multitudo sonitus aquarum : vocem dederunt nubes.
Etenim sagittæ tuæ transeunt :
19. Vox tonitrui tui in rota.
Illuxerunt coruscationes tuæ orbi terræ : commota est, et contremuit terra.
20. In mari via tua, et semitæ tuæ in aquis multis : et vestigia tua non cognoscentur.

3. In the day of my need I have sought after God,
My hands in the night (I stretch out) to Him,
And I am not wearied ;
My soul will not be comforted.
4. I think of God and . . .
I ponder and my spirit pineth ;

5. My eyes forestall the night-watches ;
I am sore troubled, yet find not words.

6. I think of the days of old,
Years long past I recall ;

7. In the night-time I ponder in my heart,
I reflect and search deeply my spirit.

8. Will God reject for ever ?
Will He never be more gracious (than now) ?
9. Or, will He cut off His favour wholly ?
For ever and ever ?

10. Hath God forgotten to be gracious ?
Hath He prisoned His kindness in His wrath ?
11. Then I said ; Now I begin (to comprehend) ;
This is a change of the right hand of the Most High.

12. I recount the deeds of the Lord,
I recall the wonders of old.

13. I muse over all Thy works,
I reflect on Thy great deeds.

14. O God ! holy is Thy way.
Which God is great like our God ?

15. Thou indeed art God, art He that doth wonders ;
Thy might midst the peoples Thou hast shown ;
16. With might hast Thou rescued Thy people,
The children of Jacob and Joseph.
17. The waters beheld Thee, O God,
The waters beheld Thee and feared,
The deeps were dismayed.
18. Mighty was the roar of the waters ;
The clouds thundered forth ;
Thy arrows sped around ;
19. The sound of Thy thunder was in the chariot-wheel ;
Thy lightnings illumined the world ;
The earth trembled and quaked ;
20. Through the sea was Thy way ;
Thy paths were through mighty waters;
Yet were Thy footprints not seen.

21. Deduxisti sicut oves populum tuum in manu Moysi et Aaron.

21. Like a flock Thou leddest Thy people,
By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

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1. *pro Idithun*; cf. Ps. xxxviii. 1.

2. *Ad Dominum*: the Massoretic text has 'unto God' in both parts of the verse. *Clamavi* ought to be *clamabo*. *Voce mea clamavi* takes the place of the Hebrew, 'My voice unto God—I will cry out,' *i.e.* 'I will call unto the Lord and cry out.' *Et intendit mihi*, 'that He may hear me.'

3. *Exquisivi*, 'I have been wont to seek': the Hebrew *darashti* means, 'I have been accustomed to have recourse (to God) for help and guidance.' What the psalmist has always done in times of need he does now. He stretches out his hands in prayer, even in the night-time. *Contra eum* is the rendering of the Hebrew *negdo*: the Massoretic text has *nigg^e^rah*, which is usually translated 'is stretched out,' (the root *ngr* having this meaning in Syriac).

Non . . . deceptus suggests that the urgent prayer of the psalmist has been heard: yet this thought fits in badly between the reference to the importunity of his prayer and the phrase *renuit consolari anima mea*. The Hebrew, *w^e^lo' taphug*, 'and it (the hand) is not weary,' is much more appropriate in the context. The Septuagint read the first person *'aphug*, but the rendering οὐκ ἠπατήθην (*non sum deceptus*) is not exact. To give the Latin a reasonable meaning as it stands, we must understand *deceptus* as='disappointed in regard to my strength,' *i.e.* 'deceived in regard to my powers of endurance.' He found that he was able to persist in his supplication to the Lord. Yet his soul finds no comfort (*cf.* Jer. xxxi. 15), and he feels himself forgotten by the Lord.

4. Yet he will still keep his mind on God (*memor ero*, or *memor sum* would be better here).

Delectatus sum: the Hebrew has, 'I will sigh.' The Hebrew verb *hamah* means to give forth voice or sound; the voice may be one of gladness or weeping. Here a word denoting sadness is obviously required by the context, and we ought to have *ingemisco*, or a rendering of the line like Jerome's: *Recordans Dei conturbabar*.

Exercitatus: 'I meditate with earnestness and effort' (For this sense of ἀσολεσχεῖν, *cf.* Ps. cxviii. 15, 23, 27, 48, 78: it is used to render the Hebrew *suaḥ* and *siaḥ*). The meditation has for object the ways of Divine Providence. In the effort of deep thought the spirit of the psalmist languishes, and becomes exhausted.

5. The *vigiliæ* are the portions into which the night was divided. These his eyes forestalled, *i.e.*, he was awake before each of them began—a way of saying that he found no sleep. The Massoretic, 'Thou holdest my eye-lids,' gives the same general sense: *smrt* was

read by the Septuagint translators as if it were the plural of *shomrah* (watch [of the night]) ; it was read by the Massoretes as *sh^e^muroth*, 'eye-lids.' The Septuagint rendering of the line was influenced by Ps. cxviii. 148, where the Hebrew runs, *ḳidd^e^mu 'enai 'ashmuroth* (Vulgate, *Prævenerunt oculi mei ad te diluculo*).

The doubts and troubles of the psalmist keep him restless, and yet he is unable to express his feelings (*non sum locutus*). When he would voice one thought, another opposing thought comes to demand utterance, and in the stress of contending thoughts he remains speechless—a sort of helpless spectator of the conflict in his own soul.

6. He goes back in spirit to the early days of Hebrew history. The *anni æterni* are equivalent to the *dies antiqui*. He brings to mind the great deeds wrought for Israel by Yahweh in the past.

7. The Massoretic text is here quite different ; 'My song (or, the music of my harp) is with my heart in the night.' This has been explained by commentators as meaning that the psalmist, for his own comfort and consolation, sang in the night time to the accompaniment of his harp songs of the glorious past. It is likely, however, that the Massoretic *n^e^ginathi*, 'my song,' or, 'my harp-music,' should be emended into *hagithi=meditatus sum*.

Exercitabar: see verse 4 above. *Scopebam*, 'I deeply searched' (from borrowed Greek verb σκοπέω, I search). The first person is better here than the Massoretic *y^e^ḥappes*. The verb used here in the Septuagint, σκάλλω, 'to hoe,' implies the carefulness and constant repetition of the self-examination which the psalmist carried out. The Douay rendering, 'I swept my spirit,' seems to imply a confusion of *scopebam* and *scopabam*.

Jerome, grouping otherwise than the Vulgate, renders vv. 6, 7 thus :

> *Recogitabam dies antiquos, annos pristinos.*
> *Recordabar psalmorum meorum in nocte,*
> *Cum corde meo loquebar, et scopebam spiritum meum.*

8–10. Here we have the problems which agitated the psalmist. The questions demand a negative answer.

8. *Aut non apponet, etc.*: see Introd., p. xlv, Semitisms, No. 3. 'Will he never again be more gracious (than He is now) ?' Jerome renders : '*Et non repropitiabitur ultra* ?'

9. *In finem*, 'for ever.' *A generatione in generationem*, 'in every age.' The Hebrew text runs :

> 'Is His favour forever at an end ?
> Is the promise no more for all time ?'

The Septuagint translators omitted *'omer*, 'word of promise,' regarding it, perhaps, as a false repetition of *gamar* ('to be at an end') which immediately precedes.

10. *Continebit*, to keep imprisoned—as Agellius explains ; *ita inclusas tenebit ut nihil inde miseris impartiatur*.

11. *Et dixi nunc cæpi* : see Introd. p. xliii. *Nunc cæpi* has arisen from the mistake of taking the Hebrew *ḥallothi*, 'my being wounded,' as if it were the first person perfect hiphil of *ḥalal*, *haḥillothi*, 'I begin.' Jerome's rendering,

Et dixi, Imbecillitas mea est hæc,
Commutatio dexteræ Excelsi,

gives the sense of the passage (Jerome read *ḥ^allothi*, not *ḥallothi*). *Cf.* Jer. x. 19. The psalmist is convinced, at the close of his inquiry, that God's attitude towards Israel has changed, and that therein lies the source of his own trouble and grief. The strong right hand of God, which so often in the past has defended Israel against her foes, seems to have grown weak ; or, perhaps, Yahweh is no longer willing to use it in defence of Israel. Hence the psalmist goes on in verse 12 to remind the Lord of His gracious deeds in the past, hoping thus to move Yahweh to employ His strong right hand again, as of old, in support of His people.

12. *Memor fui* ; 'I recount,' 'I recall.' *Quia*, representing *ki*, need not be translated. The *mirabilia* are the wonders worked by God for Israel since the beginning of her history. Read *ab initio* with *mirabilia*.

13. *Meditabor*, 'I muse over,' 'I murmur to myself.' The *adinventiones* are the same as the *mirabilia* of verse 12. *Cf.* for this use of *adinventio*, Ps. xxvii. 4 ; cv. 29, 39.

Exercebor : see above, vv. 4, 7.

14. *In sancto*, 'in holiness,' 'holy.' The *via* is God's attitude towards men.

Sicut Deus noster : the Massoretic text has, 'like God.' The original text had, probably, 'like Yahweh.'

15. *Tu es Deus* is emphatic, 'Thou art indeed God,' 'Thou alone art God' (Heb. *'attah ha'el*, 'Thou art *the* God'). *Qui facis mirabilia* is not a determination of *Deus*, but of *tu*—'Thou art God : Thou art He that worketh wonders.'

15. The heathen peoples have often seen the mighty works of Yahweh ; they have seen them, above all, in the events of the Exodus.

16. 'The sons of Jacob and Joseph' are the whole Israelite people. Jewish commentators explain the mention together of Jacob and Joseph as due to the fact that Joseph became, as it were, a second father to the sons of Jacob.

17. The 'waters' are those of the Red Sea, and the *abyssi* are equivalent in the parallelism, to the *aquæ*. The Red Sea was agitated at the approach of Yahweh ; it was lashed into huge waves by the winds which the Lord let loose upon it to prepare a passage for the Israelites. *Cf.* Exod. xiv. 21.

18, 19. The coming of Yahweh is, as usual, accompanied by a

storm of thunder and lightning. *Cf.* with the description of the theophany here Ps. xvii., xcvi. 4, and Habacuc iii. 10.

Multitudo is used here like an adjective, and is descriptive of the *sonitus aquarum*' : it must be rendered ' mighty,' or similarly. The Hebrew has, ' The clouds streamed forth water,' *zor^e^mu mayim 'abhoth* ; *zor^e^mu* may have been read by the Septuagint translators as *zerem* (' flood ') which they rendered πλῆθος. There is no obvious bridge from *mayim 'abhoth* to *sonitus aquarum.* Jerome here abandons the Vulgate rendering, *Excusserunt aquas nubila.* Possibly the Greek translators found a difficulty in the double mention of clouds in the passage, and intentionally departed from the Hebrew text (after the analogy, it may be, of Is. xxviii, 2). The voice of the clouds is the thunder, and the arrows are the lightnings.

In rota—the reference is to the wheels of God's war-chariot, the rolling of which causes the thunder (for the war-chariot of Yahweh *cf.* Habacuc iii. 8). Some commentators take *in rota* simply as=' all around,' on account of the *orbi terrae* which follows.

The *coruscationes* are the same as the *sagittæ.* *Commota, etc.*, an earthquake is part of the theophany.

20. The Sea is the Red Sea ; the ' many waters ' are the waters of the Red Sea. When Yahweh and His people had passed through the sea, the waters fell back into their normal position, and all trace of the crossing was destroyed. This is to emphasise the miraculous character of the passage through the Sea, which the might of the Lord had made.

21. When the Lord passed through the sea the people, under the leadership of Moses and Aaron (*cf.* Numbers xxxiii. 1), followed Him as sheep trustingly follow their shepherd, and so they continued to follow Him during the desert-wanderings (*cf.* Ps. lxxvii. 52). It is interesting to note that the next psalm (lxxvii) deals largely with these wanderings. The abrupt ending of the psalm makes one think that the original poem must have been longer.

The points of contact between this psalm and the Book of the Prophet Habacuc have led many commentators to regard Ps. lxxvi as dependent on Habacuc, and as not being earlier, therefore, than the sixth century B.C. This psalm should be read in close connection with Ps. xxxviii and lxxiii. *Cf.* also the *Apocalypse of Esdras* v. 33–40, and Rom. ix.

PSALM LXXVII

THE LESSONS OF HISTORY

IT is difficult to say whether this poetical *resumé* of the history of Israel is intended merely for purposes of general edification, or whether it is not, primarily, an explanation of the transference of the religious and political hegemony of Israel from the North (Ephraim) to the South (Juda: Jerusalem). The concluding section of the poem is in favour of the second interpretation. Whatever may have been the immediate purpose of the psalmist, it is evident that this poem is intended to be an instruction, and that in composing it, the psalmist believed himself to be acting in the spirit of Deut. iv. 9. The failures and sins of earlier generations should be put before the people, that so they may be warned and saved from the punishments which sins on their own part would entail. The very striking dispensation of God which had led to the abandonment of the ancient shrine of Shilo, and the subsequent selection of Jerusalem as the dwelling-place of the Lord, is particularly considered—since it can be shown to be the result of Ephraimite disloyalty to God. If the psalm were composed after 722 B.C., when the northern kingdom ceased to exist, its reflections on the failure of the North would be more pointed (but the absence of all reference to the separation of the North from the South would be then difficult to explain). The teaching of the psalm is like that of Psalms civ and cv, and it resembles, in many important points, that of Deut. xxxii, of the speech of St. Stephen (Acts vii), and of the discourse of St. Paul at Pisidian Antioch (Acts xiii. 16*f.*). The Hebrew prophets frequently used history in a like manner to enforce their teachings: *cf.* Amos i. 9*ff.*; Osee xi. 1*ff.*; Jer. ii. 1*ff.* In verse 2 the psalm is called a *Mashal*, and the whole psalm is, more or less, in the style of the Sapiential books.

The psalmist regards passages like Deut. iv. 9; vi. 7; Exod. x. 2; xiii. 14, as a *Torah* or 'Law' given to the fathers, that their children might be saved from their fate. The reference to the 'fathers' gives the poet occasion to review the history of their sins (vv. 8–11). The allusion to Ephraim in verse 9, if it is in its proper place, is to be explained by the fact that the rejection of Ephraim forms later the chief theme of the psalm.

12*ff.* Here the theme proper begins. The goodness of God to the Israelites at Zoan (Tanis), and then in the Wilderness is described, the description being based freely on Exod. 13*ff.* and Num. xx. The

Israelites answered God's goodness with ingratitude and insults (11-20). Water is not enough for them ; bread and meat they must have too—not so much, apparently, because they need them, as because they wish to see if God can really satisfy their demands. They are heard and their wish is granted, but it is granted in anger, and their punishment follows immediately. The story of the manna and quails adheres in general closely enough to Exod. xvi and Num. xi, but there is a certain amount of poetic freedom. Verse 32 recalls further sins of disobedience, and verse 33 refers, perhaps, to the incidents in Num. xiv. 21*f*. Verses 34–39 strongly remind one of Judges ii. 11*ff*., but there is this difference that Israel's turning to God is, in the psalm, described as hypocrisy—as a deception of God.

In 40–55 the poet is still thinking of the sins of the people in the desert. His further reflection on these sins leads him to recount the wonders in Egypt which had preceded the Exodus. Here again, as before, he treats the text of the Pentateuch with a certain amount of liberty. The plagues of hail and fire he attributes to the work of destroying angels.

In vv. 56–64 he reviews the apostasies of Israel in Canaan. These were punished by the loss of their 'Might' and 'Glory'—the Ark, by the slaughter of their young men, the childlessness of their women, and the death without seemly burial of their priests.

65–72. With the appearance of David God's anger is stilled, and, like a warrior awakening from deep sleep, God falls on the Philistines, and delivers them over to eternal shame (*cf.* 1 Kings v, and the narrative of David's victories over the Philistines). Through the sins of the Judges' period Ephraim lost the honour of possessing God's dwelling at Shilo ; and David made Jerusalem the political, and, practically, the religious centre of the nation. Unlike the mere Tent of Shilo the shrine erected at Jerusalem by Solomon is as firm and enduring as heaven and earth. It is interesting to note that the sins of 'Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin,' by setting up religious centres in the North in opposition to Jerusalem, are not mentioned in this psalm. The reason, obviously, is that the poet takes his theme altogether from the history of Israel *up to* the founding of the Temple. There was no need, for his purpose, to refer to any event of Hebrew history *after* that time.

The structure of the poem is somewhat clumsy ; there is much unevenness and some overlapping. Some modern critics regard vv. 40–55 as originally having no connection with the rest of the psalm, but as having formed a portion of a hymn composed after the manner of Exod. xv.[1]

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[1] Surveys of Hebrew history similar to that contained in this psalm may be read in Ps. civ, cv, cxxxiv, cxxxv ; Ezech. xx ; Ecclesiasticus xliv–xlix ; Wisdom 10*f*. ; 1 Macc. ii, 51–60 ; Hebrews xi.

1. Intellectus Asaph.

Attendite popule meus legem meam: inclinate aurem vestram in verba oris mei.
2. Aperiam in parabolis os meum: loquar propositiones ab initio.

3. Quanta audivimus et cognovimus ea: et patres nostri narraverunt nobis.
4. Non sunt occultata a filiis eorum, in generatione altera.
Narrantes laudes Domini, et virtutes ejus, et mirabilia ejus, quæ fecit.

5. Et suscitavit testimonium in Jacob: et legem posuit in Israel.
Quanta mandavit patribus nostris nota facere ea filiis suis;
6. Ut cognoscat generatio altera.
Filii qui nascentur, et exsurgent, et narrabunt filiis suis.
7. Ut ponant in Deo spem suam, et non obliviscantur operum Dei: et mandata ejus exquirant.
8. Ne fiant sicut patres eorum: generatio prava et exasperans.
Generatio, quæ non direxit cor suum: et non est creditus cum Deo spiritus ejus.
9. Filii Ephrem intendentes et mittentes arcum: conversi sunt in die belli.
10. Non custodierunt testamentum Dei: et in lege ejus noluerunt ambulare.
11. Et obliti sunt benefactorum ejus, et mirabilium ejus quæ ostendit eis.

12. Coram patribus eorum fecit mirabilia in terra Ægypti, in campo Taneos.
13. Interrupit mare, et perduxit eos: et statuit aquas quasi in utre.
14. Et deduxit eos in nube diei: et tota nocte in illuminatione ignis.
15. Interrupit petram in eremo: et adaquavit eos velut in abysso multa.
16. Et eduxit aquam de petra: et deduxit tamquam flumina aquas.

1. A Maskil of Asaph.

Hear, O my people, my Law,
Bend your ear to the words of my mouth.
2. I will open my mouth in proverbs,
Riddles from of old I will tell.

3. What we have heard and have learned,
What our fathers have told us,

4. Has not been hidden from their sons
Of the generations to come;
For we tell of the praises of the Lord, and His might
And the wonders which He hath wrought.
5. He set up a precept in Jacob,
And established a law in Israel;
And these He commanded our fathers
To make known to their sons

6. So that later generations might learn them,
So that children still to be born
Should arise and tell the tale to their sons,
7. That they might put their hope in God,
And forget not the deeds of God,
And might keep His commands;

8. Nor become like their fathers, a wayward and rebellious race,
A race of unstable heart,
Whose spirit held not loyally to God.

9. The sons of Ephraim, bow-bending and shooting,
Turned back on the day of battle.
10. They kept not the Covenant of God:
They would not walk in His Law:

11. They forgot His deeds of power
And His wonders which He had shown them.

12. Before their fathers He did wonders,
In Egypt and in the Field of Zoan.

13. He divided the sea and led them through;
And made the waters to stand as in a skin.
14. He led them by the cloud of the day,
And in the night by the fiery glow.

15. He cleft the rock in the desert,
And gave them to drink of waters in abundance:
16. Water He made to flow from the rock;
Water like rivers He made to flow down.

17. Et apposuerunt adhuc peccare ei: in iram excitaverunt Excelsum in inaquoso.
18. Et tentaverunt Deum in cordibus suis, ut peterent escas animabus suis.
19. Et male locuti sunt de Deo: dixerunt: Numquid poterit Deus parare mensam in deserto?
20. Quoniam percussit petram, et fluxerunt aquæ, et torrentes inundaverunt.
Numquid et panem poterit dare, aut parare mensam populo suo?
21. Ideo audivit Dominus, et distulit: et ignis accensus est in Jacob, et ira ascendit in Israel.:
22. Quia non crediderunt in Deo, nec speraverunt in salutari ejus:
23. Et mandavit nubibus desuper, et januas cœli aperuit.
24. Et pluit illis manna ad manducandum, et panem cœli dedit eis.
25. Panem Angelorum manducavit homo: cibaria misit eis in abundantia.
26. Transtulit Austrum de cœlo: et induxit in virtute sua Africum.
27. Et pluit super eos sicut pulverem carnes: et sicut arenam maris volatilia pennata.
28. Et ceciderunt in medio castrorum eorum: circa tabernacula eorum.
29. Et manducaverunt, et saturati sunt nimis, et desiderium eorum attulit eis:
30. Non sunt fraudati a desiderio suo.
Adhuc escæ eorum erant in ore ipsorum:
31. Et ira Deascendit super eos.
Et occidit pingues eorum, et electos Israel impedivit.
32. In omnibus his peccaverunt adhuc: et non crediderunt in mirabilibus ejus.
33. Et defecerunt in vanitate dies eorum: et anni eorum cum festinatione.
34. Cum occideret eos, quærebant eum: et revertebantur et diluculo veniebant ad eum.
35. Et rememorati sunt quia Deus adjutor est eorum: et Deus excelsus redemptor eorum est.

17. Yet sinned they further against Him;
And angered the Most High in the desert.
18. They tempted God in their hearts,
Asking food for their lustings.

19. And evil they spoke against God, and said:
'Can God deck a table in the desert?'

20. Then smote He the rock, and waters flowed,
And brooks streamed forth.
'Can He also give bread?
Or prepare a table for His people?'

21. This the Lord heard, and rejected (them);
And fire was enkindled against Jacob;
And wrath arose against Israel.
22. For they believed not in God,
Nor trusted in His help.

23. And He commanded the clouds above,
And the gates of heaven He opened;
24. And rained on them manna for food,
And gave them heavenly bread.

25. Bread of angels mortals ate,
Food in rich measure He sent them.

26. The south wind He sent from heaven,
The south-west wind He mightily brought:
27. Meat He rained on them like dust,
Even birds like the sand of the sea.

28. These fell in the midst of their camp,
All round the tents.

29. They ate and were sated indeed;
What they longed for He gave them;

30. They were not deprived of their wish.
While their food was still in their mouth,

31. The wrath of the Lord rose against them,
And slew their chief men,
And the choice ones of Israel brought low.
32. Yet for all this sinned they again,
And believed not His wonders.

33. Then vanished their days as a vain thing,
And their years in haste.

34. When He slew them, they sought Him,
Turned back, and came to Him at dawn;
35. And they remembered that God was their Helper,
And God Most High their Saviour.

36. Et dilexerunt eum in ore suo, et lingua sua mentiti sunt ei:

37. Cor autem eorum non erat rectum cum eo: nec fideles habiti sunt in testamento ejus.

38. Ipse autem est misericors et propitius fiet peccatis eorum: et non disperdet eos.
Et abundavit ut averteret iram suam: et non accendit omnem iram suam:

39. Et recordatus est quia caro sunt: spiritus vadens, et non rediens.

40. Quoties exacerbaverunt eum in deserto, in iram concitaverunt eum in inaquoso?

41. Et conversi sunt, et tentaverunt Deum: et sanctum Israel exacerbaverunt.

42. Non sunt recordati manus ejus, die qua redemit eos de manu tribulantis,

43. Sicut posuit in Ægypto signa sua, et prodigia sua in campo Taneos.

44. Et convertit in sanguinem flumina eorum, et imbres eorum, ne biberent.

45. Misit in eos cœnomyiam, et comedit eos: et ranam, et disperdidit eos.

46. Et dedit ærugini fructus eorum, et labores eorum locustæ.

47. Et occidit in grandine vineas eorum, et moros eorum in pruina.

48. Et tradidit grandini jumenta eorum: et possessionem eorum igni.

49. Misit in eos iram indignationis suæ: indignationem, et iram, et tribulationem: immissiones per angelos malos.

50. Viam fecit semitæ iræ suæ, non pepercit a morte animabus eorum: et jumenta eorum in morte conclusit.

51. Et percussit omne primogenitum in terra Ægypti: primitias omnis laboris eorum in tabernaculis Cham.

52. Et abstulit sicut oves populum suum: et perduxit eos tamquam gregem in deserto.

53. Et deduxit eos in spe, et non timuerunt: et inimicos eorum operuit mare.

36. And they loved Him—but only with words,
And dealt falsely by Him with their tongue;

37. But their heart held not fast to Him,
They were not true to His Covenant.

38. Yet He was gracious and forgave their guilt,
And destroyed them not.
And His wrath He oft turned aside,
And let not His full fury blaze forth;

39. He remembered that they were but flesh,
A breath that goeth forth, and returneth not.

40. How often they provoked Him in the desert!
And roused Him to wrath in the wilderness!

41. Again, and again they tempted God,
And embittered the Holy One of Israel.

42. They remembered not His power
On the day when He saved them from the tyrant;

43. How He wrought in Egypt His signs,
And His portents in Zoan's Field;

44. How He changed their rivers into blood,
And their streams—that they might not drink;

45. How He sent against them the dog-fly, that devoured them,
And the frog which ravaged them.

46. How He gave up to mildew their fruits,
And to the locust their toil;

47. Smote their vines with hail,
And their mulberries with frost:

48. And gave up to the hail their cattle,
And to fire their flocks.

49. Sent against them the glow of His wrath,
Bitterness, anger, and sorrow,
Missions of angels of woe.

50. Gave free play to His anger,
Spared not their souls from death,
And gave up their cattle to death.

51. And smote every first-born in Egypt,
Firstlings of all their toil in the tents of Cham;

52. Brought forth His people like sheep,
Led them like a flock in the desert;

53. Led them all-trusting, they fearing naught,
While the sea overwhelmed their foes;

54. Et induxit eos in montem sanctificationis suæ, montem, quem acquisivit dextera ejus.
Et ejecit a facie eorum Gentes: et sorte divisit eis terram in funiculo distributionis.
55. Et habitare fecit in tabernaculis eorum tribus Israel.

54. Led them to His holy mountain,
To the mountain which His right hand had won:
Drave before them the peoples,
Assigned to them by lot the divided land,
55. And made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

56. Et tentaverunt, et exacerbaverunt Deum excelsum: et testimonia ejus non custodierunt.
57. Et averterunt se, et non servaverunt pactum: quemadmodum patres eorum, conversi sunt in arcum pravum.
58. In iram concitaverunt eum in collibus suis: et in sculptilibus suis ad æmulationem eum provocaverunt.
59. Audivit Deus, et sprevit: et ad nihilum redegit valde Israel.
60. Et repulit tabernaculum Silo, tabernaculum suum, ubi habitavit in hominibus.
61. Et tradidit in captivitatem virtutem eorum: et pulchritudinem eorum in manus inimici.
62. Et conclusit in gladio populum suum: et hæreditatem suam sprevit.
63. Juvenes eorum comedit ignis: et virgines eorum non sunt lamentatæ.
64. Sacerdotes eorum in gladio ceciderunt: et viduæ eorum non plorabantur.

56. But they tempted and angered God, Most High,
And kept not His laws;
57. And turned away, and were faithless—like their fathers,
Became like a deceptive bow,
58. Angered Him with their High Places,
Made Him jealous with their idols.
59. God perceived it and despised it,
And brought Israel to naught.
60. And He rejected the Tent in Shilo,
The Tent where He dwelt among men.
61. And He gave up to bondage their 'Strength,'
And their 'Splendour' into enemy hands.
62. To the sword He abandoned His people,
And His own possession He despised
63. Fire devoured their young men,
For their maidens no bride-song was sung;
64. Their priests fell by the sword,
And their widows could not bewail them.

65. Et excitatus est tamquam dormiens Dominus, tamquam potens crapulatus a vino.
66. Et percussit inimicos suos in posteriora: opprobrium sempiternum dedit illis.
67. Et repulit tabernaculum Joseph: et tribum Ephraim non elegit:
68. Sed elegit tribum Juda, montem Sion quem dilexit.
69. Et ædificavit sicut unicornium sanctificium suum in terra, quam fundavit in sæcula.
70. Et elegit David servum suum, et sustulit eum de gregibus ovium: de post fetantes accepit eum,
71. Pascere Jacob servum suum, et Israel hæreditatem suam:

65. Then the Lord awoke like a sleeper,
Like a warrior whom wine had o'ercome,
66. And He smote His foes from behind,
To eternal disgrace He consigned them.
67. And He rejected the Tent of Joseph,
And chose not the tribe of Ephraim;
68. But He chose the tribe of Juda,
The mountain of Sion which He loved.
69. And He built His Shrine like a unicorn's dwelling,
In the land which He established forever.
70. Then chose He David, His Servant,
From the sheep-flocks He drew him away,
From the sucklings He took him,
71. To feed Jacob His people,
And Israel His possession.

72. Et pavit eos in innocentia cordis sui: et in intellectibus manuum suarum deduxit eos.

72. And he shepherded them with pure heart,
And guided them with prudent hand.

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1. *Intellectus*: see Ps. xli. 1.

Attendite=ausculta. Note the use of *meus* instead of *mi.* *Legem* translates here *torah,* 'instruction' (='the words of my mouth').

2. *Parabolis*: Hebrew, *mashal*: the poem is a *mashal* because it contains instruction for those who read it. Lessons from the past can be usefully applied to the understanding of the present, and the forecasting of the future. The content of the psalm is further described as *propositiones*—Hebrew, *ḥidoth,* 'riddles'—because the dealings of God with the fathers in the past, and the attitude of the fathers to God are full of problems. Read *ab initio* with *propositiones,* 'riddles from olden time.'

3. The *quanta, etc.,* is to be read in close connection with verse 4; to the generations to come must be handed on all the traditions of the fathers, for God has so prescribed.

4. *Narrantes,* 'while we tell,' or, 'inasmuch as we tell.' The sense is, 'We shall not hide the ancient traditions, but we shall tell them.' *Laudes* are the songs of praise which God's great deeds had called forth. *Virtutes*=acts of power.

5, 6. *Testimonium*='precept'; *legem*='guidance, instruction.' The general reference here is to Deut. iv. 9: 'Only take heed and beware lest thou forget the things which thou hast seen with thine own eyes, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life. But make them known to thy children and to the children of thy children.' The psalmist claims to be acting in the spirit of this command. He is making it possible, as far as it lies in his power, for the children of coming generations to learn the lessons of the past.

8. The coming generations are to be warned by the history of their fathers not to imitate their fathers' conduct. *Exasperans,* 'disobedient.' *Direxit*='keep it firm, determined to keep to the straight path' (*cf.* Os. vii. 10). *Creditus*=loyally devoted.

9. If, as has been frequently maintained, this psalm has for its chief purpose to explain why Ephraim was rejected, and Juda was chosen as God's special tribe, we must suppose that the explanation begins here. On some occasion, which is not otherwise determined, the Ephraimites, trained bowmen as they were, deserted their countrymen on the field of battle. The Hebrew has: 'The Ephraimites, bowmen well-equipped, turned about on the day of battle.' *Intendentes et mittentes arcum* can be rendered, 'Stretching the bow and shooting.' The Greek τόξον can mean both bow and arrow, and hence the use of τόξον with both verbs is not so awkward as the use of *arcum* with the two verbs in Latin. Many commentators look on

verse 9 as a gloss, not originally referring to this part of the poem, which has somehow found its way into the text (see below, verse 63). The concluding section of the psalm certainly deals with the election of Juda as the seat of His dwelling by Yahweh, and the rejection of Ephraim. Verse 58 seems to imply that the failure of the House of Joseph (Ephraim) was a punishment of its sins of idolatry. Ephraim became traitorous like the fathers, and is likened to a deceptive bow (verse 57). Possibly verse 9 was originally a gloss on verse 57—explaining how the Ephraimites had become a 'deceptive bow.'

10. *Testamentum*=Covenant; *legem*=torah. The *mirabilia* are the wonders of the Exodus which are reviewed in the verses that follow.

12. *In campo Taneos*; 'in the Plain (or Field) of Zoan.' Zoan was an important city of the Delta, and the psalmist regards it apparently, as the residence of the Pharaoh in the Mosaic period. The 'Plain (or, Field) of Zoan' means the city with the country around it. It is interesting to note that the expression 'Field of Zoan' occurs in native Egyptian texts in reference to the region of Lake Menzaleh. (For other references to Zoan in the Old Testament see Num. xiii. 23; Is. xix. 11; xxx. 4). For the association of Zoan (=Tanis) with the events of Exodus see Gardiner's article, 'Geography of the Exodus' in the *Recueil d'études égyptologiques dediées à la mémoire de Champollion* (Paris, 1922), pp. 203–215.

13. *Interrupit* is used here of cleaving, or dividing, the sea; in verse 15 it is used of cleaving the rock.

In utre: the Hebrew has, 'He piled up the waters as a heap (or a wall.' The Hebrew *nedh*, a heap, or wall, or dam, has been read by the Greek translators as *no'dh*, or *nodh*, a skin bottle. In Ps. xxxii. 7 *nedh* is also read as *nodh*. The translators thought of the waters of the Red Sea as being piled up as securely as if they were enclosed in a bottle. For the narrative of the crossing of the Sea, *cf.* Exod. xiv, and, for a poetical parallel to this verse, see Exod. xv. 8.

15. For the cleaving of the rock see Num. xx. 8–11; Exod. xvii. 6. *Cf.* Is. xxxv. 6; xlviii. 1.

17. *Apposuerunt*; see Introd. p. xlv, and note on Ps. vi. 5. The *inaquosum*=the wilderness.

18. *Ut peterent=petentes.*

20. *Quoniam*, Hebrew, 'Behold!' The rendering of Hebrew *hen* by ἐπεί is due to Aramaic influence.

Mensam; Hebrew has *sh^{e}'er*, meat; *mensa* is due to verse 19.

21. *Distulit*: the Hebrew is *yith'abbar*, 'He was furiously angry.' The translators taking *'abhar* in the sense of 'passing by,' understood *yith'abbar*, perhaps, as meaning that God postponed action, or passed over the offence for the moment. Some of the older commentators find in *distulit* a reference to the postponement of the entrance of the people into Canaan (so Theodoret). It is probably better to take it

here, as in Ps. lxxxviii. 39, in the sense of 'reject': so Agellius: *Rejecit eos, nullam eorum rationem habuit, repulit, contempsit.* In vv. 59 and 62 the same Hebrew verb (*hith'abbar*) is rendered *sprevit.*

The phrase *Et ira ascendit in Israel* is usually regarded as a gloss.

22. *Salutare*=saving help.

24. *Panem cœli,* 'heavenly bread.' The Hebrew has 'heavenly wheat.' The parallelism shows the 'bread' to be identical with the manna.

25. *Panem angelorum*: the Hebrew has *leḥem 'abbirim,* 'bread of the mighty' (Jerome, *panem fortium*). The translators identified the 'Mighty' with the angels—the strong champions of God. *Cf.* Wisdom xvi. 20: 'Thou gavest Thy people angel's food to eat.' *Cf.* 4 Esdras i. 19: *Cibaria*=food: it is the same as *panem. In abundantia,* 'unto satiety.'

26. God brought (*transtulit*), the south wind from Egypt (which is rather south-west) to the desert. The *Africus* is practically the same as the *Auster,* but it may, perhaps, be taken as meaning the south-west wind. The Hebrew has the east and the south wind. The wind that brought the quails, according to Num. xi. 31, seems to have been the south wind.

De coelo—because the home of the winds is in the heavens. *Induxit=adduxit.*

27–31. For the narrative of the quails compare Numbers xi.

31. *Pingues*='their strong ones': *electi,* 'their young men' (the Septuagint translators read *b^eḥure,* electi, instead of *baḥure,* young men.

Impedivit suggests the idea of binding, or netting, the feet, and so bringing down, or making to fall (so the Hebrew). Commentators have understood the term as implying that the *electi* were held back from entering Canaan.

32. *In omnibus his,* in spite of all this.

33. *In vanitate,* 'as a vain thing.' *Cf.* Num. xiv. 22, 23.

34. *Diluculo*=speedily.

35. *Adjutor,* Hebrew, 'Rock.' *Deus Excelsus='El 'Elyon.*

36. *Dilexerunt eum in ore suo*; the Hebrew has: 'They deceived Him with their mouth.' The difference is due, perhaps, to a misreading of ἠπάτησαν as ἠγάπησαν. The sense of the Vulgate is that they made pretence of loving.

38. *Fiet=factus est. Abundavit ut averteret,* 'often did He turn aside.' For the construction compare the note on Ps. vi. 5.

39. *Spiritus vadens,* a mere breath that goes and returns not.

40*f.* We have here a review of the period of the desert-wanderings, and of the wonders of the Exodus which preceded them.

Inaquoso: see verse 17.

41. *Conversi, etc.*: 'again and again they tempted' (see Ps. vi. 5). 'The Holy One of Israel' is an expression frequently found in Isaias. (See Ps. lxxxviii. 19.)

43. *Sicut* may mean 'when.' *Posuit*='performed.' The *signa* and the *prodigia* are the wonders worked in Egypt before the Exodus. Note that here, as in verse 43 above, the court of the Pharaoh is supposed to be at Zoan (Tanis). There follows a summary of the *prodigia* which forced the Pharaoh to let the Hebrews march forth.

44. *Imbres*=waters; parallel to *flumina*.

45. *Coenomyia*, a Greek word, the dog-fly (*cynomyia* would be a better spelling, *cf.* Ps. civ. 31).

46. *Aerugini*—Hebrew *ḥasil*, 'the devourer'; the name of a kind of locust (as the parallelism demands). The Greek ἐρυσίβη seems to be some sort of blight or mildew, but some commentators understand it as designating a class of locusts. Jerome has, *Qui dedit brucho germen eorum.*

47. *Pruina*: Hebrew *ḥ^a^namal*, an otherwise unknown word: the parallelism suggests that we should have here a word for hail, or something similar (*cf.* Exod. ix. 25). Jerome has *in frigore*; Aquila, 'by frost'; Symmachus, 'by worms'; the Targum, 'by locusts.' Kimchi and most moderns understand 'hail.' A different Hebrew word corresponds to *pruina* in Ps. cxviii. 83.

48. *Possessionem*='flocks.'

49. *Immissiones per angelos malos*: Jerome has: *immissionem angelorum malorum*, 'a mission (or sending forth) of angels of woe.' The angels are called evil because they brought the plagues to Egypt.

50. *Non pepercit*, etc., 'He did not spare their lives from death.' *In morte conclusit*, 'handed over to death.' Hebrew has instead of *jumenta*, etc.: 'Their life (*ḥaiyatham*) he delivered over to pestilence.' Apparently the Greeks read *ḥaiyotham* (*jumenta eorum*) and substituted 'death' for 'plague.'

51. *Primitias laboris*: the Septuagint writers read instead of *re'shith 'onim*, 'the firstlings of strength,' *re'shith 'onam*, 'the firstlings of their toil.' Jerome translates, *principium partus*. Cham=Egypt.

52. Compare with this the last verse of the preceding psalm.

54. *Mons sanctificationis*: Hebrew, 'holy territory'; probably ὅριον has been forced out by the ὄρος of the second part of the verse. The mountain is Sion.

In funiculo distributionis, 'by the measuring rod': Hebrew, 'Assigned them a possession by the measuring line (or, lot).'

57. *Arcum pravum*, 'a deceptive bow,' *i.e.*, a bow which does not fulfil the hopes placed in it. (See above, verse 9.)

58. The 'hills' are the High Places where heathen sacrifices were offered. Deut. xxxii, 16*f.*

59. *Sprevit*; see note on *distulit*, verse 21.

60. The Ephraimite Sanctuary Silo (*Shiloh*) was abandoned because of the sins of the Ephraimites. *Cf.* 1 Kings iv. 4–11.

61. The *Virtus* and the *Pulchritudo*=the Ark of the Covenant,

which God permitted the Philistines to carry off, as a sign of His dissatisfaction with the Ephraimites.

62. *Conclusit*, 'delivered up,' 'handed over.'

63. *Lamentatae*: the Hebrew verb probably refers to the singing of wedding-songs. To the maidens it was not given to hear the chanting of wedding-songs.

64. *Non plorabantur*: the Hebrew means that the widows of the priests did not have the opportunity of bewailing their dead husbands with due solemnity. The absence of honourable burial was regarded as a great disgrace (*cf.* Jer. xiv. 16; Job xxvii. 15). It would be better to read *plorabant* here. The 'priests' are probably the sons of Heli, Ḥophni and Pinehas. See 1 Kings iv.

65. God is roused, as it were from sleep—from sleep heavy like that of the warrior who has drunk deeply—and smites the enemies of Israel from behind, *i.e.* while they fly before Him in panic. The reference is to the victories of Israel in the days of Samuel, Saul, and David. *Crapulatus a vino*, 'overcome by wine.'

67, 68. The rejection of the North and the election of the South. Religious and political hegemony passed completely from Ephraim to Juda. The Ark was not brought back to Silo, but remained after its return from the Philistines in Cariathiarim (*Kiryath- y^{e}'arim*, see 1 Kings vi and vii), which was in the territory of Juda. Joseph is mentioned because Ephraim was a son of Joseph.

69. *Sanctificium*='shrine.' The Hebrew has here, 'He built His shrine like heaven.' Instead of *ramim* (='heaven') the Greeks read *remim*, 'wild oxen,' or 'bisons.' The word *r^{e}'em* is generally represented by *unicornis* in the Vulgate. If we retain the Vulgate text here, we must understand the sense to be that God built His shrine in a place of unassailable strength.

70. *De post*: compound prepositions are not uncommon in the Vulgate. (*Cf.* Deut. ix, 14, *de sub coelo*; Matt. iv. 25, *de trans Jordanem, etc.*)

72. *Intellectus manuum*, 'prudent hands.'

PSALM LXXVIII

AVENGE, O LORD, THY DESECRATED SANCTUARY

THE thought of this psalm is closely connected with that of Ps. lxxiii; and most modern, and many ancient, commentators regard both psalms as referring to the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes.

The psalm begins on a note of passion. The sacred dwelling of Yahweh has been foully profaned by heathens; the servants of the Lord have been slain in great numbers, and their corpses have been left unburied. The honour of Yahweh and of His people has been violated. Surely the Lord cannot let the crime of the heathens pass unpunished! (1-5).

If Yahweh is unwilling to help, it must be because of the sins of the fathers. If He will be angry, let Him show His wrath against the strangers who despise Him. The people of Jerusalem have not themselves deserved their sufferings, for they are loyal servants of the Lord. If, indeed, they have sinned, let the Lord be merciful; let Him, above all, be gracious towards those who are in bondage, and in prison. If He does not hear the sighs of the afflicted they must soon die.

Yahweh ought to act, at least, for the sake of His name. Let not the heathens ask mockingly: 'Where is the God of Israel?' Let the Lord be mindful of His own glory, and requite the heathen for their scorn and mockery. Vengeance on the foes of the Temple, and vengeance sevenfold, would the psalmist *with his own eyes* behold. The last verse is a vow that the people of the Lord will be constant in His praise, and from the vow it can be seen that the psalmist confidently looks for the fulfilment of his prayer for help and vengeance. With the spirit of this psalm should be compared the words of Apocalypse vi. 10: 'How long, O Master, the Holy and True, dost Thou not judge, and dost Thou not avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?'

1. Psalmus Asaph.

Deus, venerunt Gentes in hæreditatem tuam, polluerunt templum sanctum tuum: posuerunt Jerusalem in pomorum custodiam.

1. A psalm of Asaph.

O God, the heathen have fallen on Thy inheritance;
They have defiled Thy holy Temple;
They have made Jerusalem as a tent of orchard-watchers.

2. Posuerunt morticina servorum tuorum, escas volatilibus cœli: carnes sanctorum tuorum bestiis terræ.

3. Effuderunt sanguinem eorum tamquam aquam in circuitu Jerusalem: et non erat qui sepeliret.

4. Facti sumus opprobrium vicinis nostris: subsannatio et illusio his, qui in circuitu nostro sunt.

5. Usquequo Domine irasceris in finem: accendetur velut ignis zelus tuus?

6. Effunde iram tuam in Gentes, quæ te non noverunt: et in regna, quæ nomen tuum non invocaverunt:

7. Quia comederunt Jacob: et locum ejus desolaverunt.

8. Ne memineris iniquitatum nostrarum antiquarum, cito anticipent nos misericordiæ tuæ: quia pauperes facti sumus nimis.

9. Adjuva nos Deus salutaris noster: et propter gloriam nominis tui Domine libera nos: et propitius esto peccatis nostris propter nomen tuum:

10. Ne forte dicant in Gentibus: Ubi est Deus eorum? et innotescat in nationibus coram oculis nostris.

Ultio sanguinis servorum tuorum, qui effusus est:

11. Introeat in conspectu tuo gemitus compeditorum.

Secundum magnitudinem brachii tui, posside filios mortificatorum.

12. Et redde vicinis nostris septuplum in sinu eorum: improperium ipsorum, quod exprobraverunt tibi Domine.

13. Nos autem populus tuus, et oves pascuæ tuæ, confitebimur tibi in sæculum.

In generationem et generationem annuntiabimus laudem tuam.

2. They have given the bodies of Thy servants
As food to the birds of heaven;
The flesh of Thy saints to the beasts of the earth.

3. They have poured out their blood like water
All round Jerusalem;
And there was none to bury them.

4. We have been made a byword to our neighbours,
A scoff and a jest to those round about us.

5. How long, O Lord, wilt Thou be furiously angry?
And Thy jealousy burn like fire?

6. Pour out Thy wrath on the heathen that know Thee not,
And on the kingdoms that invoke not Thy name;

7. For they have devoured Jacob;
And laid waste his land;

8. Remember not our sins of the past;
Let Thy kindness hasten to meet us;
For we are wretched indeed.

9. Help us, O God our salvation!
And for the glory of Thy name deliver us, O Lord!
And pardon our sins for Thy Name's sake!

10. Lest they say among the heathen:
'Where is their God?'
Let clearly appear in our sight 'mid the heathen
Vengeance for the outpoured blood of Thy servants;

11. Let the sigh of the prisoners come before Thee:
By Thy strong arm save the children of death.

12. Pay back to our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom
The scorn wherewith they scorned Thee, O God!

13. But we, Thy people—the sheep of Thy flock—
We will thank Thee for ever:
From age to age we will publish Thy praise.

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1. *Gentes*, 'the heathen.' *Haereditas*='special possession': the reference is to the Holy Land, and to Jerusalem in particular.

Pomorum custodiam: is a translation of the Greek ὀπωροφυλάκιον. This Greek word is used here to render the Hebrew *'iiyim* (also in Michaeas i. 6; iii. 12; Jer. xxvi. 18): in Is. i. 8 and xxiv. 20, it is used to render the Hebrew, *m^e^lunah*, a night-shelter. In the passages

in Michaeas and Jeremias the Vulgate has *acervus lapidum*; in Is. i. 8 *tugurium*, and in Is. xxiv. 20 *tabernaculum*. The rendering of *'iiyim* by ὀπωροφυλάκιον is probably due to the influence of Is. i. 8. The watcher's tent in the orchard is a symbol of loneliness and desolation (like 'the night-shelter in the cucumber-field' of Is. i. 8). The statement that Jerusalem was reduced to 'a heap of ruins' would suggest rather the Chaldean destruction of the city and temple in 586, than the profanations caused by the Syrians in 170–168. Yet it is to be remembered that the psalmist speaks here as a poet, and with passion. (Compare the introduction to Ps. lxxiii, and the notes on lxxiii. 3–11.)

2. *Morticina*, 'corpses'—an adjective treated as a noun (late Latin). It was a refinement of cruelty to leave the dead unburied. Yahweh is here reminded of the things which are most likely to rouse His *zelus* (verse 5)—the desecration of His dwelling, and the infamous treatment of His devoted servants. The *sancti* and *servi* are the same. The Sancti are the *ḥ^asidhim*, the worshippers of Yahweh. *Ḥasidh* is regarded by most modern commentators as a technical term of the later period of Hebrew history, and the *Ḥ^asidhim* are identified with the Ἀσιδαῖοι of 1 Macc. ii. 42; vii. 13. Many authorities look on the Pharisees as a development of the party of the *Ḥ^asidhim*.

The passage, *Carnes . . . sepeliret* is quoted in 1 Macc. vii. 17 in reference to the murder of three score of the Ἀσιδαῖοι. This quotation has been used as an argument against the dating of the psalm in the Maccabean period; but it has been pointed out, on the other hand, that if the psalm were composed about 170–168, it could well be quoted in the text of 1 Macc. which probably was not written until shortly before 100 B.C. Goossens, *Die Frage nach makkäbaischen Psalmen*, pp. 45–49, argues strongly against the Maccabean dating of Ps. lxxiii and lxxviii. If, however, the Maccabean origin of Ps. lxxiii is admitted, it will, probably, have to be admitted also that Ps. lxxviii belongs to that period.

3. *In circuitu*='round about.'

4. *Subsannatio*=an object of derision: *cf.* Ps. xliii, 14. For the verb *subsannare* see Ps. lxxix. 7; ii. 4; xxxiv. 16.

The *vicini* are the peoples dwelling round about the Israelites.

5. The *zelus* ('jealousy') of Yahweh was formerly a source of strength for Israel: now it is apparently, turned against her. *In finem*, 'for ever,' or 'furiously." *Cf.* Ps. lxxiii. 10; lxxix. 5.

6, 7. These verses agree with Jer. x. 25. If the psalm refers to the Maccabean period, we have here a quotation from Jeremias. Those who look on the prophet as the borrower must make the psalm refer to the first destruction of Jerusalem.

8. The standpoint of the psalmist is that the present generation has not deserved the sufferings which they have to endure; hence

he supposes that he and his contemporaries are atoning, by their misfortunes, for the sins of earlier generations. The Vulgate text implies that the reference is to earlier sins of the psalmist and his fellow-saints, but the Hebrew speaks of the sins of the *ri'shonim* (' the former ones '). *Cf.* Jer. xi. 10. The generation of the psalmist is not conscious of guilt against the Law ; it feels itself to be *ḥasidh*, and believes that it deserves help rather than punishment.

Anticipare, hasten to meet.

9. The reputation of Yahweh Himself is at stake. The disgrace of His own people must redound on Himself. If He refuses to rescue His people, the heathens will say that He lacks, not the will, but the power to help His own. *Cf.* Ps. xli. 4 ; cxiii. 10.

10. *Coram oculis nostris*—so that we may see their punishment *with our own eyes*. The prayer is for vengeance to be enjoyed by the existing generation.

11. *Compediti*, those in chains. The reference may be to those actually in prison, or to the whole nation as subjected to the tyranny of oppressors.

Posside, ought, perhaps, to be *salva* or *redime* (reading the Hebrew *hatter*). *Cf.* Ps. cxlv. 7.

Mortificata is used for the abstract *mortificatio*=' death.' The ' sons of death '=those condemned to death. *Cf.* Ps. ci. 21, *filii interemptorum*.

12. *In sinu=in sinum*. The bosom of the oriental garment served the same purpose as the pockets of modern garments.

PSALM LXXIX

THE RAVAGED VINE

THIS psalm was evidently composed in a time of great national trouble, probably during the period that intervened between the return from the Exile and the Restoration. There is no strong reason for assigning it, with many modern critics, to the Maccabean period. The comparison of the Lord with a shepherd may have led to the placing of this poem immediately after Ps. lxxviii. The poem begins with a prayer that the Shepherd, and Warrior-God of Israel may place Himself again, as in the olden days, at the head of the Josephite tribes and of Benjamin. God is asked to turn again in friendship towards His people, to rouse again His warrior-strength, and to rescue Juda (if it is Juda that speaks) from its troubles.

In the second strophe God is besought not to be angry, at all events, when His people pray to Him. Hitherto their prayers have not mitigated His wrath, and His people have eaten and drunk of tears. The neighbouring nations mock at the helpless Israelites, and quarrel among each other as to who shall have the easily looted belongings of Juda (a situation resembling that which arose after the Fall of Jerusalem in 586). In the third strophe (9–14) the poet continues his complaint over the lot of his people. Israel, the Vine of Yahweh, was lovingly tended by Him in the past. It spread in luxurious growth over all the land of Canaan, reaching even to the desert hills of the distant south, and entwining itself round the cedars of God on Lebanon, and stretching its tendrils to the Mediterranean on the west, and to the great river, the Euphrates, on the east. But Yahweh has pulled down the fence of His vineyard, and has given it over to the wild beasts of the forest. In the last strophe (16–20) the poet insists on the thought that the vine of Israel is God's own special planting. Yet that vine has been uprooted, and must surely perish if the Lord does not intervene. It cannot live without the support of the right hand which has planted it.

Passing from the symbol of the vine to the people whom it symbolises the psalmist begs the care and protection of the Lord for the 'Man of his right hand'—Israel whom the Lord has raised up as His own child. The customary vow of loyalty and praise, and another repetition of the refrain bring the psalm to a close.

Psalm lxxix shows points of close resemblance with Ps. lxxxviii. The imagery of the ravaged vineyard appears again in Ps. lxxxviii. 41*f*. It is not necessary, however, to suppose that the writer of Ps. lxxxviii

borrowed from Ps. lxxix. The comparison of Israel with a vine, or vineyard, was a commonplace of Hebrew literature *Cf.* Is. v. 1–7; iii. 14; Gen. xlix. 22; Osee x. 1; Jer. ii. 21. Some modern commentators have found in the 'Man of the right hand' a Messianic reference, and see in the enumeration of the ideal borders of Israel another Messianic feature. The refrain, too, has been regarded by these writers as distinctly Messianic in its form. It would not be unreasonable to expect that a prayer for the restoration of the glory of Juda should contain features suggestive of the Messianic restoration of all things—particularly when we remember that the Messianic glory was itself imagined, to a large extent, as a restoration of the glories of the Hebrew Empire of David's day.

1. In finem, Pro iis qui commutabuntur, testimonium Asaph, Psalmus.

2. Qui regis Israel, intende: qui deducis velut ovem Joseph.
Qui sedes super Cherubim, manifestare.
3. Coram Ephraim Benjamin, et Manasse.
Excita potentiam tuam, et veni, ut salvos facias nos.
4. Deus converte nos: et ostende faciem tuam, et salvi erimus.

5. Domine Deus virtutum, quousque irasceris super orationem servi tui?
6. Cibabis nos pane lacrimarum: et potum dabis nobis in lacrimis in mensura?
7. Posuisti nos in contradictionem vicinis nostris: et inimici nostri subsannaverunt nos.
8. Deus virtutum converte nos: et ostende faciem tuam, et salvi erimus.
9. Vineam de Ægypto transtulisti: ejecisti Gentes, et plantasti eam.
10. Dux itineris fuisti in conspectu ejus: plantasti radices ejus, et implevit terram.
11. Operuit montes umbra ejus: et arbusta ejus cedros Dei.

12. Extendit palmites suos usque ad mare: et usque ad flumen propagines ejus.
13. Ut quid destruxisti maceriam ejus: et vindemiant eam omnes, qui prætergrediuntur viam?

1. For the choir-master of the 'Shoshannim' . . . an Asaphite Psalm.

2. Thou Shepherd of Israel, hear!
Thou who guidest Israel as a flock!
Thou who thronest on the Cherubs appear
3. At the head of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasse!
Arouse Thy strength,
And come to our help.
4. *O God, establish us once more;*
Let Thy face shine forth,
And we shall be saved.

5. O Lord God of Hosts, how long wilt Thou rage,
In spite of Thy servant's prayer?
6. Thou feedest us with the bread of tears;
And givest us to drink of tears in full measure.
7. Thou hast made us a theme of strife for our neighbours,
And our enemies mock us.

8. *O God of Hosts, establish us once more;*
Let Thy face shine forth,
And we shall be saved.
9. A vine stock Thou tookest from Egypt;
Dravest out the peoples and planted'st it;
10. Thou wast its guide before it,
Its roots Thou didst set;
It filled all the land;
11. Its shadow covered the Hills;
Its tendrils were twined round the cedars of God;
12. It stretched out its roots to the Sea,
And unto the River its tendrils;

13. Why didst Thou break down its fence,
That each passer-by may pluck therefrom?

14. Exterminavit eam aper de silva: et singularis ferus depastus est eam.
15. Deus virtutum convertere: respice de cœlo, et vide, et visita vineam istam.

14. The boar of the forest hath devoured it;
The solitary wild swine hath eaten it up:
15. *O God of Hosts, look down again from heaven,*
And behold this vine and visit it!

16. Et perfice eam, quam plantavit dextera tua: et super filium hominis, quem confirmasti tibi.
17. Incensa igni, et suffossa ab increpatione vultus tui peribunt.
18. Fiat manus tua super virum dexteræ tuæ: et super filium hominis, quem confirmasti tibi.
19. Et non discedimus a te, vivificabis nos: et nomen tuum invocabimus.
20. Domine Deus virtutum converte nos: et ostende faciem tuam et salvi erimus.

16. And set up again what Thy right hand hath planted;
. . . . .
17. It is burned by fire and o'erthrown;
At the chiding of Thy wrath they come to naught;
18. Let Thy hand rest on the Man of Thy right hand,
On the man whom Thou hast strengthened for Thyself.
19. Then shall we not depart from Thee.
Grant us life, and we shall invoke Thy name.
20. *O Lord God of Hosts, establish us;*
Make Thy face to shine.
And we shall be saved.

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1. *Pro iis qui commutabuntur*; See Ps. xliv. 1 and lxviii. 1. The Greek adds to the title: ὑπὲρ τοῦ Ἀσσυρίου which is taken by some of the older commentators as referring to the Babylonian attack on Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

2. *Regis*, rulest as a shepherd. *Cf.* Ps. xxii. 1; *Dominus regit me*. *Intende*='give ear.' *Ovem*, 'a flock' (used collectively). *Joseph* =Israel, as in Ps. lxxvi. 16. *Sedes super cherubim*: the cherubs may be the heavenly cherubs (the winds) of Ps. xvii. 11, rather than the Cherubs which stood above the Ark.

Manifestare, 'show Thyself as a leader,' 'come forth manifestly.'

Coram, 'at the head of.' Yahweh is asked to place Himself as Leader at the head of these tribes, as in the old heroic days. Ephraim and Manasses represent the Northern Kingdom—the House of Joseph (as distinct from Juda): Benjamin and Joseph had the same mother, and so Benjamin is grouped naturally with the sons of Joseph. Politically Benjamin inclined rather to the North than to Juda. The omission of Juda is due to the fact that Juda is supposed to be the speaker here. The prayer represents something merely ideal, for if the Northern Kingdom were still standing, its intervention on behalf of the South would be practically unthinkable—so bitter was the rivalry which always existed between the two kingdoms. The thought of the prayer is that God should re-establish the departed strength of the North, and putting Himself at the head of the northern tribes, come to the help of Juda.

4. Notice the refrain, which recurs in almost identical form in verses 8 and 20, and somewhat varied in verse 15. The showing of the

face would be the turning again in friendship towards Juda. *Cf.* the High Priest's blessing in Num. vi. 24–26: 'May Yahweh bless thee and keep thee; may Yahweh make His face to shine upon thee, and show thee favour; may Yahweh lift up His face upon thee and give thee peace!' When God turned away His face from men because of their sins, they walked in darkness: when He turned in favour towards them again, their path was lighted up with the brightness of His face. *Converte* does not mean 'convert,' but 're-establish,' 'set up again in strength.' The Targum and the older commentators understand it to mean: 'Bring us back from exile,' but there is no other suggestion of the continuance of the Exile in the psalm. The city, apparently, needs to be restored, for the wall of defence round the vineyard has been thrown down, and the enemies of Israel have poured in to work destruction in the vineyard (vv. 13, 14). *Converte* refers to the general process of restoration which is so necessary. The whole attitude of the poem points to the period following the return from the Exile as the time of its composition. *Cf.* Dan. ix. 25.

5. *Irasceris*: the Hebrew has: 'How long wilt Thou fume' (*'ashanta*, 'give forth smoke')? *Cf.* the description of the thunder storm in Ps. xvii. 9*ff*. The dark thunder clouds are the smoke of anger that comes from the nostrils of Yahweh. (See note on Ps. xvii. 9.)

Super orationem: 'in spite of the prayer.' Instead of 'servant,' the Massoretic text reads 'people'; but the Vulgate is to be preferred. *Cf.* Ps. lxxvii. 71.

6. *Nos* for *eos*—referring to the 'servant' (the people). God has fed them with the bread of tears, *i.e.*, bread consisting of tears (*cf.* Ps. xli. 4=*Fuerunt mihi lacrymae meae panes die ac nocte*). *Et potum, etc.*; tears were both food and drink. *In mensura*: for *mensura* the Hebrew has *shalish*, which means a measure (literally 'a third': *cf.* 'quart'), and the meaning of the Hebrew is: 'Thou hast made us to drink of the cup (literally, 'the measure') amid tears'; the second half of the verse repeats, with slight modification, the first. We can take *in mensura* of the Vulgate as it stands, to mean 'in abundance,' 'in full measure.' Jerome has, *Potasti nos in lacrimis tripliciter*—taking *shalish* ('a third,' 'a measure') as=threefold, and understanding *tripliciter* as meaning 'abundantly' (So also the Targum). *Cf.* Ps. ci. 10.

7. *Contradictionem*, an object of contention, or, something to be quarrelled with. The reference is to the difficulties which the surrounding peoples caused the post-Exilic community. *Subsannaverunt, cf.* Ps. ii. 4.

8. Notice that here, and in the further repetitions of the refrain, God is called *Deus virtutum*, 'God of power.'

9. This comparison of Israel with a vine has many parallels, both in the Old and the New Testament. See, in particular, the vintage-

song of Isaias in Is. v. 1–6 ; *cf.* also Jer. ii. 21 ; xii. 10–11 ; Ezech. xvii. 1–10 ; Mk. xii. 1–6 ; Matt. xxi. 33–46.

Transtulisti, 'didst change its home' (in Greek μετῆρας) ; the vine was brought from Egypt and planted in Palestine. The native peoples of Palestine were driven out that Israel might have room to expand.

10. *Dux itineris,* Greek ὁδοποίησας, 'cleared the way' for it, removing all that might impede its growth. *Viam fecisti,* which the older psalters have, would be better here. In his own translation Jerome has : *Præparasti ante faciem ejus.* There is no reference in this phrase to the journey from Egypt to Canaan ; that is contained in *transtulisti.*

11, 12. We have here a description of the wonderful growth and spread of the vine. The Mountains are the desert hills of the South ; the 'cedars of God' are the cedars of Lebanon in the North : the Sea is the Mediterranean in the West, and the River is the Euphrates. These were the ideal limits of the spread of Israel (*cf.* Ps. lxxiv. 7). The 'cedars of God' are so called because of their great age and huge dimensions. The Israelites twined their vines often round living tree-stems, and the abundance and luxuriance of the vine of Israel (as well as its spread) are suggested by the splendour of the supports round which it was entwined. With the 'cedars of God' compare the 'mountains of God,' Ps. xxxv. 7 (and see note there).

13. *Maceriam* : wall. For walls round vineyards see Num. xxii, 24 ; Is. v. 5. *Ut quid*=Why ? *Vindemiare,* 'pluck its grapes.' The 'passers-by' are the various hostile peoples who, in recent times, had attacked Israel.

14. Among these enemies, or rather symbolising these enemies generally, are the wild boar, and the *ferus singularis.* In the East the wild boar is looked on as the most destructive enemy of vineyards. The Hebrew has in the second half of the verse, 'the wild beast of the field.' In Latin *ferus* is sometimes used to mean 'wild swine' ; *singularis* is an adjective descriptive of the solitary habits of the wild swine. Some commentators take *ferus* as the adjective, and *singularis* as the substantive, explaining *singularis* as 'wild swine' (*porcus silvester,* according to Bellarmine), and taking *ferus* as indicative of the wild, untameable, character of that beast. Jerome has here : *omnes bestiae agri.* It is practically impossible to explain satisfactorily the Septuagint rendering μόνιος ἄγριος of the Hebrew, *ziz sadai.* It is useless to attempt, with some of the older commentators (such as Theodoret), to identify the wild boar with some particular enemy of Israel such as Nabuchodonosor. The swine typifies the ruthlessness and savage fury of destruction shown by the enemies of the vineyard in general.

15. Note the variation of the refrain.

16. *Perfice* : the Greeks read the Hebrew *kannah* (which is obscure)

as if it were the imperative of *kanan* (and similar in meaning to *hekhin*). We can translate *perfice* by, 'set right' (*cf.* Ps. viii. 3). *Kannah* can, however, also be a noun and mean 'a shoot,' and so Jerome has here rendered: *et radicem quam plantavit dextera tua.* The clause, *et super filium hominis quem confirmasti tibi* has been inserted here from verse 18, where it is in place.

17. It is the *vinea* which is *incensa* and *suffossa*. The subject of *peribunt* is the people of Israel typified by the vine.

18. The hand in question is a protecting, not a punishing, hand. 'The man of the right hand' is the vine which God's right hand has planted (verse 16). The psalmist passes again from the symbol to the symbolised. The *filius hominis* is identical in the parallelism with the *vir dexterae tuae.*

19. *Discedimus*, 'fall away from.' If Yahweh helps the people they will be for ever loyal and grateful.

PSALM LXXX

A HYMN FOR THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

IT is generally held by commentators that this psalm is a hymn composed for use at the Feast of Tabernacles (15th to the 22nd of Tishri, the first month of the civil, and the seventh of the ecclesiastical year). It is not a difficulty against this view that the psalm seems to begin with a priestly exhortation to the people to join in the festivities of the New Moon ceremonial, for the New Moon in question is that of the New Year, of Tishri, and the first fortnight of Tishri was celebrated as a sort of continuous festival leading up to Tabernacles. The blowing of the trumpet, or horn, at the New Moon of Tishri could be spoken of, therefore, as a part of the ritual of Tabernacles, and the hymn may be regarded as a New Year's Hymn and a hymn for Tabernacles at the same time. Tabernacles was intended, primarily, to be a commemoration of Exodus, and of the years when the Israelites dwelt in tents in the wilderness: but it was also celebrated as a sort of thanksgiving-service at the close of the vintage season (which may account, perhaps, for the phrase, 'For the wine-presses,' of the title). Thus the Feast celebrated the mercies of God both in history and in nature.

The psalm begins with an address from a choir of priests exhorting the people (verse 2), the Levites (verse 3) and the priests (verse 4) to join with full heart in the ceremonial of song and music at the Feast of Tabernacles, and reminding them that the Feast is of divine origin, and that all Israel is bound to observe it (2–6*a*).

In the second part of verse 6 a single speaker comes forward (as in Ps. lxxxiv. 9; xciv. 8*f.*; Amos vii. 10; Is. v), and, as it were, interrupting the festive music, sings in prophetic style a message which he has received, or, repeats, as a prophetic messenger, what he has heard the Lord say. This prophetic singer represents Yahweh as reminding His people of the freedom which He had given them at the Exodus, and of the blessings with which He had favoured them in the desert (7–8).

In verses 9 to 11 the words of the Lord deal with the greatest of His mercies towards Israel—the giving of the Law, the manifestation of Himself as the God and Father and Leader of His people. This manifestation demands the unswerving loyalty of Israel to Yahweh; and the complete rejection of all forms of heathen worship.

Yet, in spite of the love and favours of the Lord, Israel forgot Him, and followed after other deities. As a punishment for this

Yahweh left them to themselves, withdrawing His support. Deserted by their God the Israelites fell under the power of the heathens, and became their bondsmen. Even now Israel is not altogether loyal, and the stranger god, and the stranger ruler have influence among the people (12–13). How splendid it would be if only Israel would now turn wholeheartedly to its God! Its enemies would be quickly broken, and their defeat would continue as long as Israel remained loyal. Every blessing promised in the Law would be poured out upon the nation. It is only a loyal Israel which can truly join in the celebration of Tabernacles. It is useless for a people that hankers after strange faiths and heathen customs to join in songs of thanksgiving for the liberation from Egypt. This is the lesson of the prophetic message, and it is an appropriate lesson for the season which began with New Year's Day, included the penitential Day of Atonement (10th Tishri) and closed with the rejoicings of Tabernacles (15–22 Tishri).

It has been often maintained that there is no real connection between verses 2–6*a* and the rest of the psalm, and that, therefore, we must regard the two parts 2–6*a* and 6*b*–17 as having been originally portions of distinct poems which were brought together because of the reference to the Exodus in verses 6*a* and 7. There can be no doubt that verse 6*b* marks a completely new section in the psalm, and that 6*b*–17 is not intrinsically related to 2–6*a*. The prophetic singer in 6*b* appears as a sort of foreign element in the midst of the celebrations of the Feast. Yet, though his words stand out in striking contrast with the joyous summons to celebrate the festival (2–6*a*), they help to bring home to the minds of the people the implications of the Feast, and can thus be brought into relation with the first part of the psalm. That it was sometimes customary to construct feast-hymns of elements thus apparently unrelated we can see also from Ps. xciv. If we read Ps. lxxx in the quasi-dramatic fashion suggested in the translation, there will be no need to look on it as an artificial and casual fusion of unrelated fragments.

The date of the psalm is uncertain, but the best modern critics agree in regarding it as pre-Exilic.

1. In finem, Pro torcularibus, Psalmus ipsi Asaph.

2. Exsultate Deo adjutori nostro: jubilate Deo Jacob.
3. Sumite psalmum, et date tympanum: psalterium jucundum cum cithara.
4. Buccinate in Neomenia tuba, in insigni die solemnitatis vestræ.
5. Quia præceptum in Israel est: et judicium Deo Jacob.

1. For the choir-master of the 'Gittith' singers. A psalm of Asaph.

(Choir of priests)
2. Praise ye God our Helper;
Exult unto the God of Jacob;
3. Raise the song; make the tabret resound,
The sweet harp and the zither.

4. At the New Moon blow the horn;
On your splendid feast-day.

5. For this is a law unto Israel,
A decree of the God of Jacob

6. Testimonium in Joseph posuit illud, cum exiret de terra Ægypti: linguam, quam non noverat, audivit.

6. He made it a law in Joseph,
When he went forth from Egypt's land.

(Prophetic singer)
A speech which he knew not he heard.

7. Divertit ab oneribus dorsum ejus: manus ejus in cophino servierunt.

7. From his shoulder he put off the burden
His hands had done slaves' work with the hod.

8. In tribulatione invocasti me, et liberavi te: exaudivi te in abscondito tempestatis: probavi te apud aquam contradictionis.

8. 'In need thou didst call, and I freed thee;
Out of darkness of storm I heard thee;
At the waters of strife I tested thee.

9. Audi populus meus, et contestabor te: Israel si audieris me,

9. 'Hear, O my people, I will admonish thee,
O Israel, if only thou wouldst hear me!

10. Non erit in te deus recens, neque adorabis deum alienum.

10. No new God shall be among thee;
And no stranger God shall thou serve

11. Ego enim sum Dominus Deus tuus, qui eduxi te de terra Ægypti: dilata os tuum, et implebo illud.

11. For I am the Lord, thy God,
Who from Egypt led thee forth.
Open wide thy mouth, that I may fill it.

12. Et non audivit populus meus vocem meam: et Israel non intendit mihi.

12. 'Yet heard not my people my voice;
And Israel heeded me not;

13. Et dimisi eos secundum desideria cordis eorum, ibunt in adinventionibus suis.

13. And I let them go as their heart desired;
Their own counsel they followed.

14. Si populus meus audisset me: Israel si in viis meis ambulasset:

14. O that my people would hear me!
That Israel would walk in my ways!

15. Pro nihilo forsitan inimicos eorum humiliassem: et super tribulantes eos misissem manum meam.

15. Then soon would I humble their foes,
And stretch forth my hand 'gainst their oppressor.'

16. Inimici Domini mentiti sunt ei: et erit tempus eorum in sæcula.

16. The foes of the Lord would have to bow before Him,
And their lot would endure for aye.

17. Et cibavit eos ex adipe frumenti: et de petra, melle saturavit eos.

17. But those He would feed with the fat of the wheat,
And sate with honey from the rock.

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1. *Pro torcularibus*: *cf.* Ps. viii. 1 and lxxxiii. 1. The Hebrew has, '*al haggittith*, which the Greek translators took to be '*al haggittoth*, 'concerning (or, for) the wine-presses.' It is possible that *haggittith* or *haggittoth*, is nothing more than the name of a group of singers, and that the title has the sense given above in the translation. The psalm is primarily a song for the Feast of Tabernacles, and, as that Feast was connected with the close of the vintage, there was a certain appropriateness in including in its title a reference to the wine-presses. The phrase *pro torcularibus* can, therefore, mean that the psalm belongs to the class of songs sung 'at the wine-presses' (*gittoth*).

2. *Adjutor*, in the Hebrew, 'Strength.'

3. *Psalmus*=a song, or chant. Hence *sumite* must mean 'raise,'

or 'intone.' *Date* does not mean 'Give' here, but 'Strike': the idiom is the same as *Date vocem*. *Psalterium* and *cithara* are two kinds of stringed instruments—the harp and the lyre. *Buccinate tuba*, 'sound the trumpet.' *Neomenia* is the New Moon. The horn is not to be sounded on *every* feast of the new moon, but on a particular New Moon festival—that, namely, of the first month of the civil year, the month Tishri (October). According to Jewish tradition the ram's horn was sounded at the New Moon of Tishri—though in the Law the sounding of the ram's horn was prescribed only for the beginning of the year of Jubilee—(Lev. xxv. 9). The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated for a week beginning with the full moon (the 15th) of Tishri, and the blowing of the horn at the new moon was considered, apparently, as a sort of preparation, or prelude, for the celebration of Tabernacles. *Sollemnitas vestra* is the Feast of Tabernacles, which was known as *the* Feast, *Heḥag*. *Cf.* 3 Kings viii. 2; 2 Chron. v. 3; Ezech. xlv. 25. *Cf.* also John vii. 2, where Tabernacles is called *the* Feast of the Jews, and John vi, 4, where 'the Feast'—omitting 'the Pasch'—may well be the Feast of Tabernacles. Josephus, *Ant.* viii, iv. 1, speaks of Tabernacles as the holiest and greatest of the Jewish festivals.

In insigni die; the Greek translators have changed somewhat the meaning of the original here. The Hebrew has, apparently: 'Blow the trumpet at the new moon; at the full moon for the day of our Festival,' which implies that the blowing of the horn, or trumpet, at the new moon of Tishri was a preparation for the Feast of Tabernacles at the full moon of that month. (The first half of the 7th month was kept as a sort of uninterrupted festival). The rendering 'On the splendid day' is a free grouping and translation of 'At the full moon, for the day.' Either the translators did not understand *bakkeseh*, 'at the full moon,' or they thought of the full moon of Tishri as a great day *par excellence*.

5. Israel is bound by divine decree to the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles.

6. Tabernacles was intended to serve as a commemoration of the benefits which God had conferred on Israel at the Exodus and throughout the wanderings in the wilderness. Notice how Joseph is mentioned with Jacob, as in Ps. lxxix. 2. *Testimonium*=decree, or precept.

The subject of *exiret* is Joseph.

Linguam, etc.: the Hebrew has here the first person—'I heard,' the phrase being the introductory words of a prophetic speaker who recounts the words of Yahweh in the following verses. The *lingua quam non noverat* (or *noveram*) is the message of gladness which follows—especially the message concerning the liberation from Egypt and the benefits of the Exodus. Hitherto Israel had known only the bitterness of oppression and bondage in Egypt. The Lord now announces (the prophetic speaker hears Him, as it were, announcing)

the setting aside of the burdens which Israel has had to bear: the people will no longer have to totter under the burdens of clay and bricks which their taskmasters had put upon them. *Divertit*: the Hebrew has the first person 'I put off.' From verse 6*b* to 16 the speaker is Yahweh, as reported by the prophetic singer. Verse 17 should also probably be read in the first person. *Manus ejus*, etc.; the Hebrew has

> 'I raised from his shoulder the burden;
> His hands were free from the hod (or basket).'

The Greeks read, instead of the Massoretic *kappau middudh ta'ᵃbhornah, kappau baddudh ta'ᵃbhodnah*, 'his hands had worked with the basket.' The *dudh* is the hod in which bricks were carried, or the basket in which the materials for the making of the bricks were collected. *Cf.* Exod. i. 14. The translation of *dudh* by *cophinus* fixes the meaning of *dudh* here as 'basket'; many early commentators understood *dudh* to mean a vessel fashioned from clay (so Kimchi and Rashi, and also the Targum), so that the sense would be that the Israelites were freed from forced work in pottery. There is no support, however, in the text of Exodus for this explanation.

8. *In abscondito tempestatis*: the Hebrew has, 'in the darkness of thunder' (*cf.* Jerome, *in abscondito tonitrui*), 'in a thunder-cloud.' In a thunder-cloud Yahweh also came to the rescue of David (Ps. xvii. 12).

The *aquae contradictionis* are the waters of Meribah (Exod. xvii). The incident at Meribah is regarded as a sign of God's goodness towards Israel which is closely related to the events of the Exodus. It is remarkable that the miraculous provision with water at Meribah is the only special favour of the wilderness-period that is mentioned in this context. Possibly some rite of Tabernacles was regarded as peculiarly commemorative of Meribah—perhaps the libations of water made daily on the first seven days of the Feast, at which water brought in a golden vessel from Siloam was poured out, while Is. xii. 3 was sung (*cf.* John vii. 37). See the Talmud Tract, *Sukkah*, iv. 9.

9. Among the events commemorated by Tabernacles the most important was the promulgation of the Law at Sinai. The prohibition in the Sinaitic Code of idolatry is here especially insisted on—possibly in view of the needs of the psalmist's contemporaries. *Cf.* Lev. xxiii. 38–43.

10, 11. These verses are a resumé of Exod. xx. 2–6.

Contestabor, 'call to witness,' 'admonish.' *Si audieris*, 'O that thou wouldst hear!' The Hebrew *'im*, translated *si*, is frequently used as an optative particle (*cf.* Ps. cxxxviii. 19). *Recens*, one hitherto unknown. The Greek πρόσφατος, 'fresh,' is used here as a rough equivalent of *zar*, foreign; in Deut. xxxii it renders the Hebrew *miḳḳarobh ba'u*, 'new-fangled.'

11. *Dominus Deus*: the Hebrew, 'Yahweh, thy God' is more significant. See Introd. p. xxx.

Dilata os tuum, etc.: Most commentators explain the 'filling of the mouth' as the granting of the favours with which God was prepared to reward the loyalty of a faithful people. Some of those favours are enumerated in verses 14–17. The Targum understands the words, 'Make wide,' etc., as an exhortation to receive gladly the details of the Law.

12–13. Though in verse 9 the poet is at the standpoint of Sinai, he goes back here to events preceding Sinai. Verses 12–13 are equivalent to Jeremias vii. 24, and the whole chapter vii of Jeremias should be read along with this psalm.

Dimisi eos: Yahweh left His people to themselves because of the waywardness and stubbornness (*sh^eriruth*, as in Jer. vii. 24) of their hearts; they followed their own devices, and fell into the power of their enemies. The political failure of Israel is ascribed here, as throughout the prophetic writings, to the disloyalty of the people to the Torah.

Adinventiones, 'plannings,' 'devices.'

14, 17. This is a picture of what would happen if Israel remained faithful to the Covenant—of what may still be the lot of the existing generation, if only it turn to Yahweh, and keep His laws.

14. *Si*='O that!' 'If only!' *Cf.* verse 9 above.

15. *Pro nihil*=easily, quickly—*kim^e'at*. In Ps. ii, 13 the same Hebrew word is rendered *in brevi*, 'in no time.'

Mittere manum has here a hostile sense.

16. *Mentiti*, 'to flatter,' 'to pay false, or forced, homage.' *Cf.* Ps. xvii. 46: *Filii alieni mentiti sunt mihi.*

The *tempus* is the time of their disaster; it will perpetually endure. Some writers, however, taking *eorum* as referring to the Israelites, understand the time to be 'length of days in prosperity,'—as Kimchi puts it—'the time of their blessing.'

17. The third person *cibavit* goes badly with the verse immediately preceding. Hence it has been proposed to read the first person, and to take the verse as a development of the promise in verses 15 and 16: 'With the fat (=the best) of the wheat I would feed them (the obedient Israelites),' etc. The 'fat of the wheat' and the 'honey from the rock' recall Deut. xxxii. 13–14:

'He made him to ride on the heights of the earth,
And fed him with the fruits of the field:
He made him to suck honey out of rocks,
And oil out of flint;
Thick-milk of kine, and milk of goats,
With fat of lambs and rams,
Oxen of Bashan, and he-goats
With the liver-fat of wheat.'

The wild bees made their nest in the rocks, and olives grew often on rocky declivities. The fat, or the ' liver-fat ' of the wheat is the best and most nutritious portion of the grain. The wheat and the honey are suggestive of the abundance of natural wealth in Palestine. If *cibavit* is retained it must be regarded as one of those sudden changes of person which are so common in Hebrew.

PSALM LXXXI

GOD'S JUDGMENT ON UNJUST RULERS AND JUDGES

THE psalmist, like a seer, describes a vision which it was granted to him to see of the Lord sitting in judgment on the rulers (who were also 'the gods,' the judges) of earth. The rulers have been summoned together, and the Lord has reviewed their ruling and judging, and found it not godlike, but partial, unfair, and oppressive. The God-given power which those rulers have received they have used to crush the helpless and innocent, and to help the powerful and wicked. Those, who, by their office, were entitled to be called 'gods' have become morally perverted and blind; and walk in darkness, so that the foundations of the social and moral order have begun to totter. All this the psalmist in spirit hears spoken to the rulers by God, followed by the divine declaration to the proud rulers: 'I have called you gods and sons of the Most High, but, nevertheless, ye shall die like ordinary mortals, as have died all the princes before you.'

Full of the sense of human injustice, the psalmist in verse 8 prays that God may set aside all human rulers, and take at once the place, which is rightly His, of universal King. This is obviously a prayer for the speedy coming of the Messianic Kingdom.

The psalm is, in many respects, parallel to Ps. lvii, and should be studied in close connection with it. The scene of divine judgment which is depicted in this psalm resembles that in Is. iii. 13*f*., and the close similarity between the forms of injustice which are denounced in Is. iii and in this psalm should be noted.

The date of this poem is uncertain.

1. Psalmus Asaph.

Deus stetit in synagoga deorum : in medio autem deos dijudicat.

2. Usquequo judicatis iniquitatem : et facies peccatorum sumitis ?

3. Judicate egeno, et pupillo : humilem, et pauperem justificate.

4. Eripite pauperem : et egenum de manu peccatoris liberate.

1. A psalm of Asaph.

God standeth forth in the divine assembly,
He giveth judgment on the gods in their midst ;

2. 'How long will ye judge unjustly,
And give preference to the godless ?'

3. Procure judgment for the poor and the orphan :
Establish the right of the lowly and poor.

4. Rescue the weak and the poor ;
Set him free from the hand of the godless.

5. Nescierunt, neque intellexerunt, in tenebris ambulant: movebuntur omnia fundamenta terræ.

6. Ego dixi: Dii estis, et filii Excelsi omnes.

7. Vos autem sicut homines moriemini: et sicut unus de principibus cadetis.

8. Surge Deus, judica terram: quoniam tu haereditabis in omnibus gentibus.

5. Neither knowledge nor reason have they;
In darkness they wander,
All foundations of the earth are moved.

6. I said indeed: 'Ye are gods,
Sons all of Most High.

7. Yet ye shall die like mere mortals;
Like one of the princes ye shall fall.'

8. Arise Thou, O God; judge the earth!
For all the peoples are Thine!

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1. *Synagoga deorum*; the general interpretation of this psalm depends mainly on the meaning of 'gods' in this verse. Three explanations of 'gods' have been put forward; (*a*) they are the angels who preside over the various kingdoms of the world (after the manner suggested in the chapters x–xii of Daniel); (*b*) they are the heathen kings and princes who are regarded as having been divinely appointed, and are therefore represented as summoned before God to hear His judgment on their rule; (*c*) they are, like those addressed in Ps. lvii, unjust judges—the unjust judges of Israel. Since those who are summoned to hear the divine judgment are spoken of as *unjust* judges, and since they are promised the death of mere mortals, we cannot suppose that they are the guardian angels of different kingdoms. Our choice must be made, then, between *b* and *c*. In favour of *c* is the general resemblance of the situation here to that in Ps. lvii, and the familiar fact that judges were called *'elohim*, 'gods,' in Israel (as we see from Exod. xxi. 6; xxii. 8, 28). The oppression of the weak and poor which is censured in the psalm consists in refusing such help and support to the poorer classes in the State as the judges, the administrators of the law, might be expected to give. In favour of *b* is the circumstance that rulers were also everywhere judges, that it is threatened to the *'elohim* that they will die like the princes who have gone before them, and that, in the last verse, Yahweh is prayed to take the place of the *'elohim* as universal Judge, so that there cannot be question merely of unjust judges in Israel. View (*b*) seems to be most in harmony with the spirit of the poem, and if we unite (*c*) with it to the extent of including the judges and rulers of Israel among the *'elohim*, it becomes a satisfactory groundwork for the explanation of the psalm.

The 'assembly of the gods' is, then, a gathering of the rulers of the peoples which has been summoned by Yahweh. The poet speaks as if he had been present at the assembly, and begins by describing Yahweh as standing forth to give judgment. We hear nothing of the details of the trial, but only of a sentence, for the guilt of the *'elohim* was, apparently, the reason for their being summoned together.

The Hebrew text speaks of a *synagoga Dei*, which might, of itself, be a name for the assembly of the Covenant-people, Israel (*cf.* Num. xxvii. 17 ; xxxi. 16) ; it may, however, also mean ' a divine assembly,' and suggest that the *'elohim* have been called together by God, or that they have been summoned into the presence of the heavenly court. The second half of the verse in the Hebrew runs : ' In the midst of the *'elohim* He holds judgment.' The Latin makes the *'elohim* the objects of the judging, and this agrees substantially with what follows. The Hebrew, ' In the midst of the *'elohim,'* in the second half of the verse, justifies, to some extent, the Latin *synagoga deorum* of the first half. The Latin, as it stands, can be simply understood to mean that Yahweh stands forth in the midst of a gathering of rulers and judges, and that He proceeds to declare those rulers and judges guilty of injustice—of unfairness towards the poor and the helpless, and of criminal indulgence towards the powerful.

2. *Judicatis iniquitatem,* ' give unjust decisions.' *Faciem sumere,* to take into account rather the individual than the merits of his case, to be partial ; it is equivalent to *personam accipere* (Rom. ii. 11 ; Gal. ii. 6 ; Ephes. vi. 9, etc.) ; it must not be taken to mean, ' put on the appearance of sinners.'

3, 4. Here the ideal of ruling and judging activity is set forth. *Judicare* means to procure fair hearing, or trial, for someone ; *justificare* implies the procuring of a sentence of acquittal (Hebrew *hiṣdiḳ,* to declare *ṣaddiḳ*—' just ' or, ' innocent '). *Pupillus* is ' the orphan.' The prophets speak frequently of the absence of fairness towards widows and orphans, and the poor in Israel. Fairness towards the helpless was the highest and best quality in an Oriental ruler and judge. Instead of giving decision in favour of the wicked and against the helpless innocent, it was the duty of rulers and judges to stand forward actively as defenders of the oppressed.

5. These words are part of God's address to the rulers. He finds in them no trace of genuine comprehension of their duties, and speaking of them contemptuously in the third person, He says : ' But these have no insight nor understanding ; their minds are not open to the truth ; all their being is perverted.' The ' darkness ' is the absence of moral principle—moral blindness and perversity. The ' foundations of the earth ' are the principles of right and justice which the rulers have abandoned. The bases of the moral order have been disturbed by their conduct.

6. The heathen rulers, and rulers and judges generally, are appointed by God. There is no passage in the Old Testament of which *Dii estis, et filii Excelsi omnes* is a direct quotation, but judges are called gods (Exod. xxii ; Ps. lvii), and Proverbs viii. 15, 16 says :

> ' By me kings rule and princes decree justice ;
> By me princes have power, and nobles—
> All the judges of earth.'

which seems to mean that heathen princes, and all rulers and judges of earth are the appointed of Yahweh. Similarly, Hebrew kings are likened to the angels of God (2 Kings xiv. 17; xix. 28). Our Lord quotes verse 6 of this psalm in John x. 34 to show that, since even the Israelites themselves were spoken of as 'gods,' there could be no blasphemy in His description of Himself as Son of God.

7. Yet though the rulers are called 'gods,' that will not save them from death; like every prince who went before them, they, too, shall die (for the phrase 'shall fall' compare Osee vii. 7).

It has been suggested that the primitive text contained here *shedhim*, 'demons,' instead of *sarim*, 'princes,' so that the sense would be: 'ye shall fall like one of the fallen angels (=demons).' If this reading were to be accepted, it would be necessary to hold that the gods of the psalm were the angelic guardians of the nations (see note on verse 1), and that we had here a reference to the fall of the angels. There is, however, no other reason for reading here *shedhim* than the hypothesis as to the meaning of 'gods' for which the suggested reading is put forward as a support.

8. God is called on to take the place of all earthly rulers. All the peoples are His (*Haereditabis in omnibus gentibus*), and He has appointed all their human rulers. Hence He can put aside those rulers, and become King of the world Himself. This was the ideal of the Messianic outlook, and we may regard verse 8, therefore, as a prayer for the speedy ushering in of the Messianic Era.

PSALM LXXXII

A PRAYER FOR HELP AGAINST HOSTILE NEIGHBOURS

THIS psalm has been confidently assigned by leading modern critics to the period of the Maccabean struggles. The situation implied in the psalm resembles, certainly, that which is set out in 1 Macc. v. There we see described the political and military situation which followed on the first great successes of the movement led by Judas Maccabaeus. The peoples who appear in the Maccabean narrative as leagued against Juda are, to a large extent, the same as those mentioned in the psalm. The appearance of Tyre in this psalm as an enemy of Israel cannot be easily paralleled from any other Scriptural narrative but that of 1 Macc. v. The Ishmaelites of the psalm would be equivalent to the Arabians of the Maccabean text (1 Macc. v. 39), and the Hagrites ('Agareni') might be regarded as closely allied with the Ishmaelites (if there is—which is very doubtful—any connection between 'Hagrite' and Hagar the mother of Ishmaèl). Moab might be regarded as represented by Bosra (1 Macc. v. 26). Amalek could not, however, have been an enemy of Juda in the Maccabean period for the Amalekites had at that time already long ceased to exist. Ashshur (verse 9) is a further difficulty against the Maccabean dating—unless we take it as a name for the Samaritans, or for the Syrians, or unless we read Geshur (as the Vulgate does in 2 Kings ii. 9 for the Massoretic *'Asheri*). Thus the Maccabean dating is not without its serious difficulties (as explained further in the notes below). The alternative dating of the psalm in the time of the wars of Josaphat (discussed in the notes below) is faced also with serious difficulties, so that one cannot say more with certainty than that the psalm presupposes a political situation in which several neighbouring peoples are leagued in a dangerous confederacy against Juda (Israel), such that the national life of Israel is threatened by disasters, as great as those which faced the Hebrews in their early struggles against the native Canaanite kings at the time of the Conquest of Palestine, and later during the period of the Judges. The psalmist prays that the same fate may be decreed for the present enemies of Israel as was meted out to the ancient Canaanite princes, and to the Midianites who fought against Gideon.

1. Canticum Psalmi Asaph.	1. An Asaphite psalm
2. Deus, quis similis erit tibi ? Ne taceas, neque compescaris Deus :	2. O God, who is like unto Thee ? Be not silent, and hold not back, O God.

3. Quoniam ecce inimici tui sonuerunt: et qui oderunt te extulerunt caput.
4. Super populum tuum malignaverunt consilium: et cogitaverunt adversus sanctos tuos.
5. Dixerunt: Venite, et disperdamus eos de gente: et non memoretur nomen Israel ultra.

6. Quoniam cogitaverunt unanimiter: simul adversum te testamentum disposuerunt,
7. Tabernacula Idumæorum et Ismahelitæ:
Moab, et Agareni,
8. Gebal, et Ammon, et Amalec: alienigenæ cum habitantibus Tyrum.
9. Etenim Assur venit cum illis: facti sunt in adjutorium filiis Lot.

10. Fac illis sicut Madian, et Sisaræ: sicut Jabin in torrente Cisson.
11. Disperierunt in Endor: facti sunt ut stercus terræ.

12. Pone principes eorum sicut Oreb, et Zeb, et Zebee et Salmana:
Omnes principes eorum:
13. Qui dixerunt: Hæreditate possideamus Sanctuarium Dei.

14. Deus meus pone illos ut rotam: et sicut stipulam ante faciem venti.
15. Sicut ignis, qui comburit silvam: et sicut flamma comburens montes:
16. Ita persequeris illos in tempestate tua: et in ira tua turbabis eos.
17. Imple facies eorum ignominia: et quærent nomen tuum Domine.
18. Erubescant, et conturbentur in sæculum sæculi: et confundantur, et pereant.
19. Et cognoscant quia nomen tibi Dominus: tu solus Altissimus in omni terra.

3. For behold how Thy foes make tumult,
And they that hate Thee raise proudly the head!
4. Against Thy people they plan evil;
Against Thy worshippers they take counsel.
5. They say: 'Let us destroy them as a nation,
That Israel's name no more may be heard of.'
6. Thus have they all planned,
Against Thee have all made a league—

7. The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites,
Moab and the Agarenes,

8. Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek,
The Philistines and the men of Tyre;

9. Ashshur, too, has joined them;
They give help to the sons of Lot.

10. Do Thou to them as to Midyan and Sisera,
As to Jabin by the stream of Ḳishon:
11. At Endor they were destroyed;
Like filth on the streets they were made.
12. Make their princes like Oreb and Zeeb,
And like Zebah and Ṣalmunna all their chiefs—

13. They who said: 'Let us seize on God's shrine!'

14. Make them, my God, like whirling stalks,
And like chaff before the wind,

15. Like a forest-devouring fire,
Like a mountain-burning flame,

16. So follow them up with Thy storm,
And terrify them with Thy wrath.

17. Fill their faces with shame
That they may seek Thy name, O Lord.

18. Let them be for ever ashamed and afraid;
Let them be abashed and come to naught;
19. That they may know that Thy name is Yahweh,
That Thou alone art Most High over all the earth.

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1. *Canticum psalmi*: *cf.* Psalms lxv, lxxxvii, cvii.

Quis similis, etc.: the Hebrew here is parallel to *Ne taceas*—*'al d°mi lakh*. There is a verb *damah* in Hebrew which means 'to be similar' and another *damah* which means 'to be silent.' In the

parallelism *d°mi* must be regarded as coming from *damah*, 'to be silent': but the Greek translators derived it from the other *damah*, 'to be similar.' *'Al*, the prohibitive particle, they took to be an ordinary negative particle, and the resulting sense, 'There is none like unto thee,' they expressed by a rhetorical question, 'Who is like unto thee?'

Ne taceas refers to the silence of inaction (as in Os. iv. 6). God is as inactive in punishing His foes as if He was not aware of their offences. *Ne compescaris*, 'hold not back'—from smiting the foes of Israel, who are also the foes of God.

3. *Sonuerunt*, 'make a clamour.' The enemy are becoming bold against Israel once more.

Super means here 'against' (Hebrew *'al*). *Malignaverunt consilium*: the Hebrew has: 'they craftily devise a conspiracy.' Instead of *adversus sanctos* the Hebrew has 'Against thy hidden (or, stored up) ones,' and Jerome renders, *adversus arcanum tuum*. The 'hidden ones,' *ṣ^ephunim*, are the Israelites who are hidden, as it were, by the protection of Yahweh. The proper name *Ṣ^ephanyah* (Sophonias) suggests the same thought. The *Sancti* of the Latin text renders the meaning accurately enough, but it is to be noted that it is not used in the supposed technical sense of the Hebrew *ḥ^asidhim*. Jerome's *arcanum* is probably to be understood of the Temple.

5. *De gente* is a pregnant expression—'so that they may cease to be a nation.'

6. Of one mind they have made a pact (*testamentum disposuerunt*) against Israel, and therefore against God, *adversum te*.

7–9. There is much dispute as to the historical occasion here referred to. Several important modern critics argue that the historical context of this psalm is supplied by 1 Macc. v, where many of the same peoples appear as leagued in the Maccabean period against Israel. There we find as enemies of Juda, Edom, Ammon, the Ishmaelites (=the Arabians, 1 Macc. v. 39), Philistine and Tyre. Amalek is not mentioned in the Maccabean narrative, nor the Hagarenes (Hagrites), nor Gebal, nor Ashshur. Gebal is not the same as Byblus (north of Tyre): it is the ancient land of Seir, the northern portion of the Edomitic highland, the district called by Pliny (Hist. Nat. v. 20) Gebalene. The Agarenes or Hagrites are mentioned in Chronicles (1 Chron. v. 10, 19*f*.; xxvii. 31), where they appear as a tribe dwelling to the east of Gilead: they appear in the inscriptions of Sanherib in close connection with the Nabateans. The *Alienigenae* are the Philistines (*cf*. Ps. lix. 10; lxxxii. 8; lxxxvi. 4; cvii. 10); in Ps. lv. 1, they are called in the Vulgate *Allophyli*. The 'sons of Lot' are Moab and Ammon. The most difficult name to explain is Ashshur. It cannot be Assyria if the psalm is Maccabean, for the empire of Assyria had ceased to exist long before the Maccabean period. Hence it has been suggested that we should read Geshur instead of Ashshur,

or that Ashshur=Syria, or that, since Samaria was planted after its capture by the Assyrians with colonists from Assyria, Ashshur in this context=Samaria. The Samaritans appear as vigorous enemies of the Hebrews throughout the post-Exilic period. Another theory makes Ashshur to be an Arabian tribe mentioned in a Minean inscription. Against the theory of the Maccabean origin of this psalm stands the mention of Amalek—a people that had long ceased to exist before the alleged date of the psalm, and whom we cannot identify with any foe of Israel in the Maccabean age. It might be said, of course, that the reference in Amalek is not so much to a tribe, or people Amalek, as rather to the district which was anciently occupied by the Amalekites. The other names are, however, so definitely the names of actually existing peoples, that this method of explaining away the difficulty of the mention of Amalek can scarcely be accepted. Those who refuse to find the historical background of this psalm in 1 Macc. v, seek it in the narrative of 2 Chron. xx, which describes the successful war of Josaphat against the Moabites, Ammonites, and the people of Mt. Seir (*cf.* Gebal), and others. But among the enemies of Josaphat we do not find Amalek, Philistia, Tyre, or Assyria. It is, of course, quite possible that the psalm has not in view either the incidents narrated in 1 Macc. v, or those in 2 Chron. xx; but that it refers to otherwise unrecorded conflicts of the pre-Restoration period after the Exile. It is evident from the psalm that the traditional enemies of the Hebrews have formed a serious combination against them, and that the psalmist considers the position of Israel to be as critical as it was in the old days when the Hebrew tribes were first battling for the possession of Canaan, or when the life of Israel was threatened by the East-Jordan nations in the days of Gideon. He prays for such help against the foes who now threaten, as God granted long ago against the enemies of Israel in the time of the Judges.

10. A war with Midian is described in Num. xxxi. It is probable, however, that the psalmist has here in view the exploits of Gideon against Midian (Judges vi, vii, viii). His great victory over the Midianites described in Judges vii is referred to by Isaias (ix. 4) as the 'Day of Midian'—and this day of Midian probably is in the mind of the psalmist here. The overthrow of Sisera and Jabin is described in Judges iv, and again, poetically in Jud. v. Sisera was defeated at the battle of Ḳishon, and the poetical narrative of his defeat, the Song of Deborah, is one of the most remarkable documents of ancient Israel. The story of the hostility of Midian follows closely in the Book of Judges on the Song of Deborah, so that it would seem as if the psalmist had before his eyes the Book of Judges. There is no reference to Endor in the account of the battle at Ḳishon in Judges, but Endor was not far distant from the scene of the battle, and some of the fighting must have swept over it.

12. For Oreb and Zeeb see Judges vii. 25. They were the two princes of the Midianites whom Gideon captured and slew after the exploit recorded in Judges vii. Zebah and Ṣalmunna were the Midianite princes whose defeat and death at the hands of Gideon are narrated in Judges viii. The psalmist wishes for the present enemies of Isreal the same fate which befell the Midianites and their princes. The circumstance that the poet takes his references to the past from the story of Gideon's campaign against the Midianites implies, perhaps, that the present enemies are largely from the same district from which the Midianites came.

Hereditate possideamus: 'possess as a fixed and rightful possession.' *Sanctuarium Dei*: the Hebrew has, 'the fields of God,' *i.e.*, the land of Canaan. The Latin suggests that all Palestine is a shrine of the Lord. Jerome has *pulchritudinem Dei*, which, like his *arcanum* in verse 3, apparently refers to the Temple.

14. *Rotam*: the psalmist prays that the foes of Israel may become like the stalks of wild artichoke which, thrown together in bundles, are whirled along by the wind. That there is no reference to wheels in the proper sense is clear from the parallelism. We find the same wish for the future of the wicked in Ps. i. 4 and xxxiv. 5. In Is. xvii we have: 'They (the nations) shall be chased as the chaff of the hills before the wind, and like the "wheel" before the whirlwind' (Vulgate: *sicut turbo coram tempestate*). *Cf.* also Job xxi. 18. The *stipula* is the dry straw on the threshing-floor, or among the stubble.

15. Like a fire which swiftly consumes a forest, or wood crowning a hill, and leaves the hill bleak and bare, so shall God swiftly destroy the enemies in the burning fury of His wrath. Isaias develops in x. 16–19 a similar picture of the consuming activity of God's anger.

16. Notice that the anger of Yahweh is at once a storm, or breath of rage, and a fiery glow of wrath.

17. When God has allowed His anger to burn and storm against them, they will at last turn to Him to seek Him, but they will not find Him.

18. The piling up of words referring to shame is intended to suggest the deepest depths of ignominy. When the enemy have come humbly to Yahweh to offer Him their submission and homage, He will drive them contemptuously away.

19. Through their humiliation the enemy must learn that there is one God, and one alone over all the earth, and that that God is Yahweh. The last verse seems to imply that, when the wicked have fully realised the true place and power of Yahweh, they also will receive mercy. Thus the harshness of verses 14–18 is softened—at least by implication.

PSALM LXXXIII

HOW PLEASANT IS THY DWELLING, O LORD

THIS is a genuine pilgrim-song—full of enthusiastic love and longing for Sion and its sacred ceremonial, and for the Holy City, Jerusalem. It should be read in close connection with Ps. cxxi and with Ps. xlvii and lxxxvi.

In verses 2–4 a layman, who may only enter the Courts of the Temple tells of his vehement longing for the holy places. He has come from far away, and now in Jerusalem he is at home again, and compares his mood to that of the bird, that, after long absence, has found again its nest and its young.

In verse 5 the psalm turns to the praise of the Levites and priests—the dwellers in the House of the Lord.

Yet, as verse 6 tells us, not only are they happy that dwell ever in God's House: they also are happy who, when far away, set their heart on visiting the Holy City, trusting in God's help to carry out their plan. Even though their path to the Sanctuary (verse 7) may pass through dark valleys and arid steppes, God will make springs to flow for them, and turn the desert into fertile land, and upborne by the thought of their goal, they will be conscious of no hindrance or peril on their way. So will they march forward, not growing weary but rather gathering strength as they go, until they come into the presence of God in Sion (8).

Arrived in the Temple the pilgrims make their prayer. It is not chiefly for themselves. They beseech God to look graciously on His Anointed—either the King, or the people—so that all may be well with Israel.

In verse 11 the singer turns back to the delight of his soul in the nearness of Yahweh (*cf.* Ps. xxvi. 4). Even though, as a layman he cannot enter the inner Temple, a day for him in the Temple Courts is worth a thousand days in his own dwelling far away. He would fain dwell even on the threshold of the Temple for ever. For there (12) he has security and happiness, peace and divine favour.

If it is true, as many critics hold, that the psalms which speak of eager longing to revisit the Temple express the spirit of the Judaism of the Diaspora, we must date this and similar psalms in the post-Exilic period. But as there is no convincing reason for supposing that there was no Diaspora before the Exile, or that pious Jews were not wont to return from foreign lands in the pre-Exilic period

to celebrate the great feasts in Jerusalem, we cannot take the post-Exilic dating as assured.

1. In finem, Pro torcularibus filiis Core, Psalmus.

2. Quam dilecta tabernacula tua Domine virtutum :
3. Concupiscit, et deficit anima mea in atria Domini.
Cor meum, et caro mea exsultaverunt in Deum vivum.
4. Etenim passer invenit sibi domum : et turtur nidum sibi, ubi ponat pullos suos.
Altaria tua Domine virtutum Rex meus, et Deus meus.

5. Beati, qui habitant in domo tua Domine : in sæcula sæculorum laudabunt te.
6. Beatus vir, cujus est auxilium abs te : ascensiones in corde suo disposuit,
7. In valle lacrimarum in loco quem posuit.
8. Etenim benedictionem dabit legislator, ibunt de virtute in virtutem : videbitur Deus deorum in Sion.

9. Domine Deus virtutum exaudi orationem meam : auribus percipe Deus Jacob.
10. Protector noster aspice Deus : et respice in faciem Christi tui :
11. Quia melior est dies una in atriis tuis, super millia.
Elegi abjectus esse in domo Dei mei : magis quam habitare in tabernaculis peccatorum.
12. Quia misericordiam, et veritatem diligit Deus : gratiam et gloriam dabit Dominus.
13. Non privabit bonis eos, qui ambulant in iñocentia : Domine virtutum, beatus homo, qui sperat in te.

1. For the choir-master of the Korachite 'Gittith'; a psalm.

2. How delightful is Thy Tent,
O Yahweh of Hosts !
3. My soul pineth in longing
For the Courts of the Lord ;
My heart and my body exult
Unto the living God.
4. The sparrow hath found a home,
And the turtle-dove a nest
To place therein their young—
Thy altars, O Lord of Hosts,
My King and my God !

5. Happy they who dwell in Thy House, O Lord !
For ever they praise Thee.
6. Happy the man whose help is from Thee,
When he hath set pilgrimages in his heart,
7. Through the Valley of Tears,
To the goal he hath fixed !
8. He who hath given the Law, giveth also the blessing.
So rise they from strength unto strength ;
Till the God of Gods appeareth on Sion.

9. Lord, God of Hosts, hear Thou my prayer !
Attend unto it, O God of Jacob !
10. God, our Protector, look hither,
And behold the face of Thy Anointed :
11. For a day in Thy Courts is better
Than a thousand ('at home').
Rather would I dwell humbly in the House of my God
Than abide in the tent of sinners.
12. For God loveth kindness and truth ;
The Lord giveth favour and glory :
13. To those who walk uprightly He denieth no good.
O Lord of Hosts, happy is the man who hopeth in Thee !

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1. *Pro torcularibus* ; see Ps. lxxx. 1. For the 'sons of Korach' see Ps. xli. 1.

Tabernacula : the Temple is meant, the plural indicating, perhaps, the whole complex of Temple buildings. Ps. xlii. 3 uses the plural

in similar fashion. It is clear that this psalm implies the existence of the Temple, but whether the pre-Exilic or the post-Exilic structure is the object of the psalmist's longing is not indicated.

3. If we take the verbs here as present, the meaning must be that the psalmist is overcome with joy at sight of the Temple, or that he vividly anticipates what will happen when he comes in sight of the Temple. Some commentators have taken the verbs literally as translations of the Hebrew perfect, and have assumed that the psalmist is here describing how he had longed for the Temple while he was yet far away from it, and how he, then, breaks out into rejoicing when he arrives in Jerusalem. In any interpretation there is made a contrast between the longing of the Israelite for the far-away Temple and his joy at beholding the sacred shrine once again (*cf.* Ps. xli and xlii). The 'courts,' or 'fore-courts,' of the Temple are mentioned, probably, because the psalmist is a layman, or speaks as the representative of a group of (pilgrim) laymen.

Cor et caro: *cf.* Ps. lxxii. 26. The *cor* and *caro* are the 'whole being.'

4. The meaning is not, as some have supposed, that while the little birds are free to make their nests in the Temple, these longing pilgrims have been forced to live far away from it. The birds here are the Israelites themselves and their children who can rejoice in the Temple as their home; and the returning pilgrims in re-visiting the Temple feel like a bird returning to its nest.

5. Since the Israelites feel as secure and as safe in the Temple as do young birds in the nest, so must they be thought doubly happy who dwell constantly in the Temple itself—*i.e.*, the priests and Levites. The 'praising' is peculiarly the duty of the 'dwellers in the Temple' —the Priests and Levites.

6. As the Vulgate text stands, the meaning is, that he is happy who puts all his trust in God when he decides to make pilgrimages to the Temple (*ascensiones*). The Hebrew word corresponding to *ascensiones* seems rather=*semitae* (as Jerome renders), but the Vulgate (=Greek) is here to be preferred. There is no reason for doubting that *ascensiones*=pious journeys to Jerusalem at the great festivals (though, of course, the mystical interpretation of the word as referring to contemplative ascents of the soul to God is also, in its own way, legitimate). Happy is the pious Israelite who determines to make the pilgrimages, trusting in God to overcome all the difficulties which may beset the path of pilgrimage! In the Hebrew text the word which corresponds to *disposuit* belongs to the following clause. The word is *'obh^e^re*, which, read with the two following words in the Hebrew, gives the sense, 'Those who traverse the Valley of Bakha.' The Septuagint translators read *'obh^e^re* as *'arakh* or *'abadh*, 'to set' or (Aramaic) 'to make' (*disposuit*).

7. In the Greek text we have here accusatives=*ad vallem, ad*

locum, and we can understand the ablative with *in* as the Vulgar Latin equivalent of *in* with the accusative. It would be better, however, to take *in valle* as if it were='in,' or 'through,' the valley, and to regard *in loco* as=*in locum*. Then, replacing *disposuit* of the preceding clause by *transeuntes*, we get the sense that the pilgrims who trust in God are happy even when they pass through the Valley of Tears on their way to the Place (=the Temple). The Hebrew '*Valley of Bakha'*' has been taken by the Greek translators as 'the Valley of Tears' by reading *Bakha'* (which is usually translated as 'balsam-shrub') as *bekheh* ('tears'). So also in 2 Kings v. 24, the Greek text transforms *bakha'* into 'weeping' (possibly influenced by the place-name 'Weepers' in Judges ii. 5). Following the older versions generally, we may assume that 'Valley of Tears' is here the correct sense of the text. This 'Valley of Tears' (which has passed from here into the *Salve Regina*) cannot be identified with certainty. Prince Max identifies it with a bleak, wild valley between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea where St. Sabbas built his monastery, the Lawra. Perhaps it is not necessary to seek any precise identification for the Valley in question; the psalmist wishes to say that for the pilgrim whose trust is in God no portion of his path to the Shrine will hold terrors—not even if that path were to pass through the bleakness and darkness of a wild valley which ordinary travellers would call a 'Valley of Tears.' The *locus quem posuit* can be interpreted only of the Temple, which the pilgrim had determined for himself as the goal of his journey. The Hebrew is here again very different. It runs:

> 'Passing through the Valley of Tears,
> They make it a place of springs.'

The wildness and bare bleakness of the valley is unnoticed by the pious enthusiastic pilgrims, and, instead of a place of dread, it becomes for them a place of peace and verdure and rest, like an oasis to the desert-traveller. Where the Massoretic text has *ma'yan*, 'a place of springs,' the Greek translators read *ma'on*, 'a place' or 'dwelling' (*locus*).

8. The Vulgate apparently means: In that place (the Temple) the Legislator (*i.e.* God, who prescribed the *ascensiones*) will give blessings to the pilgrims. Remembering these blessings the pilgrims hurry on, not growing weary as travellers do whose road is long, but rising from strength to strength, finding new vigour as they advance towards their goal, where they hope to look on the glory of the God of Israel in Sion. The analogy between this interpretation of the text and the facts of the spiritual life has often been noted, and it has been often quoted in favour of the purely mystic interpretation of *ascensiones*.

The Hebrew is here again quite different in its suggestiveness. It runs :

> 'An early rain hath decked it with blessing ;
> They go from strength to strength ;[1]
> He (=they) appeareth before God in Sion.'

Moreh, 'early rain' (autumn rain) was taken by the translators as the participle, *moreh*=teacher (*legislator*), and the preposition *'el* used after the verb *yera'eh* (*videbitur*) was taken as *'El*, 'God.' The verb *ya'teh*, 'clothe,' 'deck,' was taken as='give.' Thus the same original consonantal text has been read in very different fashions.

The early rain and the blessing which it gives form a development of the picture in the preceding passage. The bleak valley becomes for the enthusiastic pilgrims a fertile oasis which the autumn rains have decked with verdure.

9. The prayer of the pilgrims in the Temple. 'God of Jacob'—Jacob was the great type of the pilgrim to whom God reveals Himself.

10. The Hebrew 'Our Shield' has become *Protector noster*. The *Christus* ('Anointed') may be the King—'the Anointed of the Lord'; or it may be the whole people (*cf.* Ps. xxvii. 8), regarded as 'the Israel of God.'

11. *Atriis*; see verse 3. The Hebrew *baḥarti* which is correctly rendered *elegi* ought, probably, to be emended into *baḥ^a darai*, 'in my home.' A day in the Courts of Yahweh is better than a thousand at home. Hence we should read in the following, *Abjectum esse. . . (melius est) . . . quam habitare in tabernaculis peccatorum*, 'It is better to be lowly in the House of my God than to dwell in the tents of sinners.'

12. The Latin is here quite clear, but it differs wholly from the Hebrew: the latter has: 'For a sun and a shield is Yahweh God.' There is no way of reducing the Greek and the Massoretic texts here to a single primitive consonantal text. Apparently the Greek translators refused to designate God either as 'sun' or 'shield,' and, there-

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[1] Instead of rendering 'from strength to strength' many commentators translate 'from rampart to rampart,' as if there were question of a procession advancing from point to point up to the Temple on Sion, or of marching from tower to tower in the fortifications of Jerusalem (as in Ps. xlvii. 13*f.*). An interesting attempt has been made by Dr. Peters in the Journal of Biblical Literature (Vol. xxxix. 1920, p. 52*ff.*) to show that this psalm is to be understood as a processional hymn, and that the clauses from verse 6*b* (*Ascensiones, etc.*) to verse 8 are merely indications as to the course of the procession. He renders these verses thus: 'Causeways in the midst of them (between the western hill and Mt. Sion) they have passed over. In the valley of weeping the fountain that they make (=point where Virgin Spring issues through tunnel in Tyropeon Valley). Also the pool (probably lower pool of Siloam) the leader encircleth. They go from rampart to rampart (up the scarps of the hill of Ophel). Is seen the God of Gods on Sion (procession reaches the southern gate of Temple).

fore substituted for the Hebrew a commonplace of Jewish thought. It has been conjectured, however, that, instead of the Massoretic *shemesh*, sun, the Greeks read in their Hebrew *shemen*, 'oil,' and that they rendered *maghen*, 'shield,' by βοήθεια. Thus ἔλαιον (oil) and βοήθεια may have originally stood in the Greek text. Through scribal error ἔλαιον became ἔλεον (*misericordia*), and then βοήθεια became ἀλήθεια (after Ps. xli. 9 and xlii. 3). This is the only place in the Old Testament where God is directly called 'sun'—though in Ecclus. xlii. 16 the glory of God which is manifest in all His works is compared to the rising sun the rays of which illuminate all things:

> 'The rising sun is revealed over all things:
> As the glory of the Lord is over all His works.'

12. God will withhold no blessing from those who walk in justice—since He gives to them favour (His divine favour) and glory (a quasi-divine endowment, *kabhodh*). Receiving so much, His worshippers can need naught else. Notice that throughout this psalm and elsewhere *Deus virtutum*=*Deus exercituum*=God of Hosts.

PSALM LXXXIV

ISRAEL'S COMFORT IN SORROW

THIS psalm is a liturgical composition dating from the post-Exilic period. It reflects the griefs and hopes of the post-Exilic community in Israel. The decree of their liberation from Babylon had filled the Exiles with joy, but their home-coming had been full of disappointment. Instead of joy and peace, unsettlement and sadness prevailed throughout the land, and men were wondering why the Lord had brought them back from Babylon only to the disillusionment of Juda. We find in the psalm the same spirit which breathes in the beginning of the books of Aggaeus and Zachary. If the Lord had great designs for Israel when He used Cyrus to set the Exiles free, why does He not begin to accomplish them ? Has the divine anger which handed over Jerusalem and its people to the Chaldeans not been appeased by the sufferings of the Exile ? Is that anger about to burst forth against His unhappy people once more ? Is there no hope that the old greatness of Israel will be restored ? Surely the wonders of the past, and, above all, the grace of liberation from captivity will not end in the destruction of Israel !

The poem falls easily into three parts. In the first (2–4) the graces and mercies of the liberation from the Exile are recalled. We can imagine this part of the psalm as sung by a portion of the people gathered together for worship, by a choir, or by the priests.

The second part of the psalm includes verses 5–8. Here another choir implores the Lord to complete the mercies which the Liberation had begun. Surely He will not be again angry with His people as He had been before the Exile. Surely His wrath will not blaze forth unto the destruction of Israel again ! It is time for the Lord to show His gracious favour again, that Israel may live and praise Him.

In the third section (9–14) a soloist sings a prophetic message of comfort for Israel. As if listening to the words of Yahweh the prophet sings. His song is an oracle of hope. Help from the Lord is at hand. The words of Yahweh are words of peace—of rest and of security. The Peace and the Glory of the Lord will soon be seen again in Israel. A wonderful picture of the Lord's benignant rule is drawn in familiar Messianic colours. Justice, Truth, Graciousness, Peace, as Yahweh's ministering Angels, will rule everywhere in the land. The earth will be fruitful beyond all hope. Wherever the Lord walks abroad in the land Justice goes before Him and Peace

follows in His train. The hope that painted a picture like this at a time of deepest political depression could spring only from the unshakeable conviction that God was on the side of Israel.

The structure of this poem should be compared with that of Ps. cxxv—where the prophetic portion is wanting, and also with that of xciv and lxxx.

1. In finem, Filiis Core, Psalmus.

2. Benedixisti Domine terram tuam: avertisti captivitatem Jacob.
3. Remisisti iniquitatem plebis tuæ: operuisti omnia peccata eorum.

4. Mitigasti omnem iram tuam: avertisti ab ira indignationis tuæ.

5. Converte nos Deus salutaris noster: et averte iram tuam a nobis.
6. Numquid in æternum irasceris nobis? aut extendes iram tuam a generatione in generationem?
7. Deus tu conversus vivificabis nos: et plebs tua lætabitur in te.
8. Ostende nobis Domine misericordiam tuam: et salutare tuum da nobis.

9. Audiam quid loquatur in me Dominus Deus: quoniam loquetur pacem in plebem suam.
Et super sanctos suos: et in eos, qui convertuntur ad cor.

10. Verumtamen prope timentes eum salutare ipsius: ut inhabitet gloria in terra nostra.

11. Misericordia, et veritas obviaverunt sibi: justitia, et pax osculatæ sunt.
12. Veritas de terra orta est: et justitia de cœlo prospexit.
13. Etenim Dominus dabit benignitatem: et terra nostra dabit fructum suum.

1. For the choir-master of the Korachites.
A psalm.

(Choir A)
2. Thou hast blessed Thy land, O Lord;
The exiles of Jacob Thou hast brought back:
3. Thou hast pardoned the sin of thy people;
All their sins Thou hast forgiven.

4. Thou hast put away Thy anger;
Thou hast turned aside Thy burning wrath.

(Choir B)
5. Establish us again, our rescuing God!
Abandon Thy anger against us.
6. Wilt Thou be angry with us for ever?
And stretch out Thy wrath from age to age?

7. Thou wilt grant us life again, O God,
And Thy people shall rejoice in Thee!

8. Show us, O Lord, Thy favour,
And grant us Thy saving help.

(Prophetic soloist)
9. I listen to what the Lord God speaketh within me.
Verily, of peace for His people He speaketh,
And for His worshippers,
And for those who take it to heart.
10. Yea! His rescue is near to us that fear Him,
That glory may dwell once more in our land.
11. Kindness and Truth have met together:
Justice and Peace have kissed.

12. Truth hath sprung from the earth;
Justice looketh down from heaven!
13. Indeed the Lord granteth blessing,
And our land giveth its fruit.

14. Justitia ante eum ambulabit: et ponet in via gressus suos.	14. Justice goeth before Him, And maketh His footsteps a path.

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1. *Filiis Core, psalmus,* 'a Korachite psalm.'

2. *Benedixisti*: Hebrew, 'Thou hast found pleasure in'; the same Hebrew word is used in reference to the Servant in Is. xlii. 1. *Cf.* Matt. iii. 17; xii. 18.

Avertisti: *avertere* is used in the Psalter to render a variety of Hebrew verbs. Here, if *captivitas* means, as commentators on the Vulgate generally assume, the exiles in the Babylonian captivity (the abstract being used for the concrete) *avertisti* must ='Thou hast brought back.' Commentators on the Hebrew text prefer, as a rule, to translate *shabhta sh^e^bhuth,* 'Thou hast changed the lot, or fate.' But whether we render 'Thou hast changed the lot of Jacob,' or 'Thou hast brought back the exiles of Jacob,' the meaning is ultimately the same, for there can be little doubt that the text refers to the great intervention of Yahweh in the fate of Israel which resulted in the return from the Exile. The psalmist is enumerating in verses 2–4 the blessings and favours which the Lord conferred on Israel when He brought the Babylonian Exile to a close. The exiles had returned from Babylon full of hope and enthusiasm, but their hope did not soon find fulfilment, and their enthusiasm gave way quickly almost to despair.

3. *Remisisti* and *operuisti* are equivalent in the parallelism. The sign of God's pardon was the permission to the Exiles to return.

4. *Mitigasti*: 'make to cease' (Jerome, *continuisti*); *cf.* Ps. lxxxviii. 10.

Ira indignationis, 'burning wrath.'

5. *Converte nos,* 'establish us again' (Ps. lxxix. 4). The Hebrew *shubhenu* is strange, for *shubh* is usually intransitive. Possibly we should read *shubh-na',* 'pray, return,' and read it with the next following verb, *hapher* (=make to cease)—so that the sense would be, 'O our rescuing God, pray make to cease *once more* Thy anger against us.' We could get this same sense from the Vulgate by omitting *nos* and regarding *converte* as used idiomatically (as explained in note on Ps. vi. 5). It had seemed when the Exile was ended that God would henceforth be gracious with His people. Yet they are still in difficulties, and the outlook is dark. Hence the prayer that God may finally cease from His anger, and make Israel at last secure.

6. Surely the wrath which had brought on the Exile, and which for a little time had seemed to be ended, will not be maintained for ever. *Extendes,* 'protract' (*cf.* Zach. i. 12). With this verse should be compared Ps. lxxvi. 9, and chapters lxiii–lxiv of Isaias.

7. *Deus*: the Septuagint translators read *ha'el*, 'O God,' which is better than the Massoretic *h^a^lo'* (*nonne*). *Conversus . . . vivificabis*, 'Thou, O Lord, wilt *again* give us life' *Cf.* Ps. lxx. 20, and verse 5 above. The people are dead, as it were, at present, and it depends on God whether they will live again. If the Lord gives them life again, they will praise Him. From the dead He cannot hope for praise.

8. *Salutare*, saving help (Ps. ix. 16). The loving kindness of the Lord will be shown in His gracious rescue of Israel from her sorrows.

9. Here obviously begins a new section of the psalm. The poet begins to speak as a prophet. He will tell the people what the Lord says in answer to their prayer. The burden of the prophetic oracle is hope—hope in the nearness of salvation. Like Isaias in chapter xl, he speaks words of comfort for Jerusalem; 'Her battling is over and her iniquity is pardoned, for from the hand of Yahweh she hath received double for all her sins. . . . The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it.' *Cf.* Is. xlv. 8; lviii. 8.

In me is not represented in the Hebrew; but it suggests here the appropriate sense of a message received by the psalmist from God who speaks within him.

Quoniam introduces the direct discourse. God speaks of peace. He will not be always angry. To His *sancti*, His loyal servants, He will particularly grant peace.

In eos qui convertuntur ad cor: the Greek has, 'unto those who turn their heart to Him.' The Massoretic, *w^e^'al yashubhu l^e^kislah*, 'and let them not return to folly,' contains a warning which does not fit well into a message of hope and kindness. Hence it has been proposed (by Delitzsch) to read *w^e^'al yesh^e^bhu b^e^li kislah*, 'and let them not be without hope.' The Greeks read in their Hebrew text, *we'^e^le shabhe libbam loh*, 'to those who return in heart (or, turn their heart) to Him'—which may well have been the genuine original text. We may take *ad cor* as='from their heart,' 'sincerely' (*qui ad illum corde convertuntur*); or we may understand the phrase as meaning 'returning to their own heart'—from which they had gone away by sin, taking seriously the warnings they have heard. Augustine who read *qui convertunt cor ad ipsum* (like the Greek), says: *Eja fratres, vultis ad vos pertineat ista pax quam loquitur Deus? Covertite cor ad ipsum, non ad me, aut ad illum, aut ad quempiam hominem.*

10. *Verumtamen*, 'verily.' Salvation is nigh. Instead of the defeat and disgrace and disillusionment which the people have suffered, they will soon see the glory of olden days dwell in the land once more. This re-dwelling of glory is the end which God aims at in His new attitude of kindness towards His people. The glory in question has

been understood by many Commentators as the Shekhinah, the token of the divine Presence of which we hear in Exod. xvi. 10, and 3 Kings viii. 11—the cloud which filled the House of the Lord when the Lord entered into His dwelling. If that visible token of Yahweh's presence once again appears the greatness of the Israelite people will surely be re-established. But possibly the reference is not to the Shekhinah (since the text speaks only of 'Glory,' not of 'His Glory') but to the splendid condition of the re-established (and Messianic, or quasi-Messianic) Israel.

11–14. The poet describes in detail the blessings of the new period —first the spiritual blessings in verses 11, 12, and then those of the material order, verses 13, 14. The blessings of the spiritual order are loving-kindness, truth (fidelity), justice and peace. Kindness and Truth, thought of as ministering spirits, or angels, hasten to meet each other in friendship: Justice and Peace, thought of also as angelic beings, salute each other with a kiss. In one end of the earth Kindness rules; in another Truth. Here there is Justice; there flourishes Peace. Wrath and punishment have ceased: love and truth are supreme. Or, as verse 12 puts the thought, Truth is as universal as the green which clothes the earth, and Justice is as all-ruling as the sun which looks down on all things from heaven. It is not necessary to discuss whether the Truth and Justice of verses 11 and 12 are human or divine. What the poet wishes to suggest is the all-embracing influence and rule of justice and truth in the new era. It is clear that we have here definite Messianic features, and that the poet imagines the new order, which the saving help of Yahweh will set up, in the same fashion as the author of Ps. lxxi. It is to be noted in connection with the expression 'Justice sprouteth forth from the earth,' that one of the technical titles of the Messias was, 'the Sprout' (*cf.* Ps. lxxi. 7, and the notes on Ps. lxxi generally), and that 'shooting forth,' or 'sprouting forth' belongs to the Messianic vocabulary (*cf.* Is. iv. 2; xlv. 8; lxi. 11, etc.). The personification of Kindness, Truth, Peace, etc., is frequent, as we have seen, in the Psalter (*cf.* Ps. xlii. 3; xcvi. 2, etc.). Justice, Truth, Kindness and Peace are, in a sense, the angels to whose charge the men of the Messianic kingdom will be entrusted.

13. *Benignitatem*: the Hebrew speaks of 'the good'—which may, perhaps, be chiefly the rain (according to Deut. ii. 12). Fruitfulness of the soil is one of the most frequently enumerated tokens of the Messianic era.

14. *Et ponet in via gressus suos*; this would be more intelligible if we had *ejus* instead of *suos*. We could then render: 'and maketh His steps a way,' *i.e.*, Justice walks before Yahweh, but it also follows in His footsteps. The Massoretic text seems to mean: 'Justice goeth before Him, and giveth heed to the path of His footsteps,' and the Vulgate is a literal reproduction of this Massoretic text.

If the Hebrew were slightly emended we could get the suitable sense :

> ' Justice goeth before Him,
> And Peace (or, Salvation) on the path of His footsteps. .'

When Yahweh passes through the land Justice is His herald and Salvation (or Peace), the minister that follows Him. The present sorrows of Israel will be followed by an age which shall know naught but glory, graciousness, kindness, truth, justice, peace, abundance and the visible presence and rule of Yahweh.

PSALM LXXXV

A COMPLAINT

VERSES 1–7 are an introduction which describes the wretchedness of the psalmist (who represents, perhaps, the people of Israel), and emphasises the kindness and mercy of the Lord. The psalmist hopes for a favourable hearing for his prayer because he is loyal to God and zealous in worship. God will surely hear him.

In verses 8–10 the might of Yahweh as Creator and sole God is extolled. Even the heathens will be forced to acknowledge the greatness of Israel's God at the end of days. A God so mighty as Yahweh cannot abandon His faithful servants.

Verses 12 and 13 contain the customary vow to give praise and glory to the Lord, if only He grants to the singer His gracious help and rescue. The vow is preceded by a prayer (verse 11) that God may keep the psalmist steadfast in that goodness which he had claimed as his in the introduction. Obviously such goodness is necessary in one who confidently hopes for God's help.

In verse 14 the complaint proper is set forth (in words borrowed from Ps. liii. 5). We learn that the psalmist is suffering under some sort of oppression, inflicted by 'godless' and 'strong ones.' We are not told the precise character of the oppression. The words of the psalm are general and conventional. Verses 15–17 take up again the praise of God's mercy which we have in the introductory verses, and beg for a token of Yahweh's favour for the psalmist. When the godless and the strong ones clearly see that Yahweh is on the side of the psalmist they will be cast into confusion.

The title, 'Prayer of David,' given to this psalm is justified by the circumstance that the greater part of the psalm consists of echoes of Davidic psalms. The general character of the psalm (even apart from its obvious dependance on a great many other psalms)—its vagueness, peculiar arrangement, and the psalmist's method of describing himself—all these things point, probably, to the post-Exilic period as the date of the poem.

Oratio ipsi David.

1. Inclina Domine aurem tuam, et exaudi me: quoniam inops, et pauper sum ego.

A prayer of David.

1. Bend down Thine ear to me, O Lord, and hear me,
For I am poor and wretched.

2. Custodi animam meam, quoniam sanctus sum : salvum fac servum tuum, Deus meus, sperantem in te.
3. Miserere mei Domine quoniam ad te clamavi tota die :
4. Lætifica animam servi tui, quoniam ad te Domine animam meam levavi.
5. Quoniam tu Domine suavis, et mitis : et multæ misericordiæ omnibus invocantibus te.
6. Auribus percipe Domine orationem meam : et intende voci deprecationis meæ.
7. In die tribulationis meæ clamavi ad te : quia exaudisti me.

2. Protect me for I am faithful.
Rescue Thy servant, my God,
He hopeth in Thee.

3. Have pity on me, O Lord,
For unto Thee I cry all the day :
4. Gladden the soul of Thy servant,
For to Thee, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

5. For Thou, O Lord, art kind and gentle,
And rich in pity to all who call upon Thee.
6. Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer,
And regard the words of my plaint.

7. In the day of my trouble I cry unto Thee,
For Thou wilt hear me.

8. Non est similis tui in diis Domine : et non est secundum opera tua.
9. Omnes Gentes quascumque fecisti, venient, et adorabunt coram te Domine : et glorificabunt nomen tuum.
10. Quoniam magnus es tu, et faciens mirabilia : tu es Deus solus.

8. Thy like is not among the gods, O Lord !
Nought is like unto Thy works.

9. All the peoples Thou hast made shall come,
And do homage to Thee, O Lord,
And praise Thy name.
10. For Thou art great and dost wonders :
Thou alone art God.

11. Deduc me Domine in via tua, et ingrediar in veritate tua : lætetur cor meum ut timeat nomen tuum.
12. Confitebor tibi Domine Deus meus in toto corde meo, et glorificabo nomen tuum in æternum :
13. Quia misericordia tua magna est super me : et eruisti animam meam ex inferno inferiori.

11. Lead me, O Lord, on Thy path,
That I may walk in Thy truth.
Let my heart rejoice
That it feareth Thy name.
12. With all my heart I will praise Thee, O Lord my God !
I will exalt Thy name for ever.

13. For great towards me was Thy favour ;
From deepest Sheol Thou hast rescued me.

14. Deus, iniqui insurrexerunt super me, et synagoga potentium quæsierunt animam meam : et non proposuerunt te in conspectu suo.
15. Et tu Domine Deus miserator et misericors, patiens et multæ misericordiæ, et verax.
16. Respice in me, et miserere mei, da imperium tuum puero tuo : et salvum fac filium ancillæ tuæ.
17. Fac mecum signum in bonum, ut videant qui oderunt me, et confundantur : quoniam tu Domine adjuvisti me, et consolatus es me.

14. O God, the godless have risen up against me ;
The band of the strong ones seek my life.
They keep Thee not before them.
15. But Thou, O my God, art gracious and kind,
Long-suffering, rich in pity and true.
16. Look on me and be gracious to me ;
Give strength to Thy servant,
And help the son of Thy handmaid.

17. Show me a sign of Thy favour,
That they who hate me may see and be brought to shame,
Because Thou, O Lord, hast helped and consoled me.

Oratio ipsi David ; verse 6 of this psalm describes it as an *oratio*, and since it is to a large extent a mosaic of quotations from Davidic psalms it is called a ' prayer of David.' *Oratio* appears in the titles of a number of psalms. *Cf.* Ps. xvi, lxxxix, ci, cxli.

1. *Cf.* Ps. xvi. 6*b* (Ps. xvi being also an *Oratio David*) : xxx. 3*a* ; xl. 11*a* ; lxx. 2*b* ; lxxxvii. 3*b* ; ci. 3. With verse 1*b* compare Ps. xxxvi. 14.

2. *Sanctus* : a ' loyal worshipper.' The psalmist calls himself also a ' servant ' of the Lord. This does not necessarily imply that the prayer is uttered by an individual in his own name, and for himself. If, as many hold, the prayer is liturgical, Israel may be regarded as the suppliant. As David was a *servus Domini*, so could Israel as a people be called the *servus Domini*. With 2*a* compare Ps. xxiv. 20*a*.

3. *Tota die*, ' always,' ' at all times.'

4. *Animam levavi* ; *cf.* Ps. xxiv. 1 : *Ad te Domine levavi animam meam.*

5. *Suavis*, ' kind ' ; *cf.* Ps. xxiv. 8, *Dulcis et rectus Dominus.*

Mitis, ' quick to forgive,' ' gracious,' ; Jerome renders *propitiabilis.*

Multae misericordiae, ' rich in loving-kindness ' ; see below verse 15.

6. Compare Ps. v. 2–3 :

> *Verba mea auribus percipe Domine,*
> *intellige clamorem meum.*
> *Intende voci orationis meae, rex meus et Deus meus.*

7. Compare Ps. xvi. 6*a* : *Ego clamavi quoniam exaudisti me Deus.*

8. Compare Exod. xv. 11 :

> *Quis similis tui in fortibus Domine ?*
> *Quis similis tui, magnificus in sanctitate,*
> *terribilis atque laudabilis, faciens mirabilia ?*

Cf. Ps. lxxxviii. 9 ; Deut. iii. 24. Verse 9 and 10 show that the psalmist did not ascribe a real existence to the gods of the nations. There is nothing with which God or His works can be compared. In the second half of the verse we must add *opus* or *simile.*

9. Compare Ps. xxi. 28*b* ; lxxi. 11 ; Is. lxvi. 18–20.

10. *Cf.* Ps. xlvii. 2. *Tu es Deus solus* excludes the reality of the heathen gods.

11. *Cf.* Ps. xxvi. 11. The ' way ' is the path of God's commandments.

Laetetur, etc. ; the Hebrew has : ' Make one (or, single) my heart, so as to fear Thy name.' The Septuagint translators read here *yiḥadh* (imperfect of *ḥadhah*), *laetetur*, instead of the Massoretic *yaḥedh*, ' make one ' (piel imperative of *yaḥadh*). It is possible that there is here an echo of Jer. xxxii. 39, and that the sense of the Hebrew here is : ' Give me (the community) a single, uniform spirit, so that we may all equally fear Thee.'

12. *Cf.* Ps. ix. 2.

13. *Infernus inferior* is the lowest underworld. The community was dead, as it were, and in the farthest recesses of Sheol.

14. Almost verbatim from Ps. liii. 5. See note there.

15. See note, verse 5 above. *Cf.* Exod. xxxiv. 6 ; Num. xiv. 18 ; Joel ii. 13. The mercy and kindness of God are frequently emphasised in the Old Testament. This verse suggests an idea of God which is closely similar to that conveyed by the New Testament.

16. As it stands in the Vulgate this verse is apparently, a prayer for the fulfilment of the prophecy in 2 Kings vii. 11–16. The *imperium* is, then, the rule promised by Nathan to the house of David. The older psalteries read here more accurately *potestatem*, which renders the Septuagint reading κράτος. Neither the Hebrew *'oz* nor the Greek κράτος is intended to mean kingly rule. The prayer is a prayer for strength to overcome the attacks of enemies. Jerome renders : *Da fortitudinem tuam servo tuo.*

Filius ancillae is parallel to *servus* ; it means a slave born in the household. Such slaves were regarded as peculiarly loyal (*cf.* Ps. cxv. 16 ; Exod. xxiii. 12). The psalmist in calling himself a *filius ancillae* wishes to make his prayer more urgent.

17. *Fac mecum*, etc.; *A signum in bonum* is a token that will prove that Yahweh is on the side of the psalmist—not a portent, or miracle. The psalmist hopes that the Lord will intervene on behalf of Israel, so that the enemies of Israel may see that He is still the God of Israel, and be thwarted in their plans. *Cf.* Ps. xxxix. 4.

PSALM LXXXVI

CITIZENSHIP OF SION

THIS is one of the Songs of Sion—a song of praise concerning Jerusalem, the City of God. It was a favourite thought of Hebrew prophecy that Jerusalem, as the dwelling-place of Yahweh, was an inviolable sanctuary. When the city was overthrown by the Chaldeans in 586 B.C., the conviction of Jerusalem's spiritual inviolability became more prominent. Even though it had fallen politically, Jerusalem could still become the great centre of the pure worship of God, the spiritual home of all true believers. With the spread of Judaism and the increase of proselytism among the heathens, Jerusalem tended to be regarded more and more as the mother of foreign peoples (*cf.* Is. lv. 1 ; xliv. 4*f.*; ii. 2*ff.*). The thought of Sion's universal spiritual motherhood is the central thought of this poem. Wherever the Jewish worshipper may be, he looks to Jerusalem as to his mother ; thither his heart turns in prayer, and thither he pilgrims when opportunity offers in order to take joyous share in the liturgy of the Temple.

The psalm begins with the praise of Jerusalem as the city of God's own dwelling, and the object of His special choice and love (vv. 1–3). Then, in verses 4–6 the Lord tells wondrous things (*gloriosa*) of Sion. It is the centre not merely of Palestine, but of all the world. Egypt (called here by the poetic name Rahab) and Babylon look on Sion as the home of Yahweh's worship, and because they have learned to acknowledge Yahweh as their God, regard themselves as citizens of Sion. Philistia, Kush, and Tyre are represented, too, among the loyal friends of Yahweh, and as citizens of Sion, are spoken of as born there (verse 4). While it is thus true that all the great heathen nations have given children to Sion, Sion herself is universal mother of all her children ; whether born far away or within her walls, the boast is made that in Sion they were born. When the Lord reads through the list of the peoples He finds everywhere His own, His worshippers, Jews of the Diaspora, and fervent proselytes. Over each nation appears, as it were, the rubric : ' These were born there ' (in Sion)—(vv. 5–6). Considered as the mother of the sons of God throughout the world, as the metropolis of the Messianic Kingdom, Sion is the abode only of the glad and joyous (verse 7).

This psalm should be read along with Ps. xlvii and xlv. There is no indication of exact date in the psalm ; but modern commentators are probably right in assigning it to that portion of the post-Exilic period when proselytism was already flourishing.

1 Filius Core, Psalmus Cantici.

Fundamenta ejus in montibus sanctis :
2. Diligit Dominus portas Sion super omnia tabernacula Jacob.
3. Gloriosa dicta sunt de et, civitas Dei.

4. Memor ero Rahab, et Babylonis scientium me.
Ecce alienigenæ, et Tyrus, et populus Æthiopum, hi fuerunt illic.
5. Numquid Sion dicet : Homo, et homo natus est in ea : et ipse fundavit eam Altissimus ?

6. Dominus narrabit in scripturis populorum, et principum : horum, qui fuerunt in ea.
7. Sicut lætantium omnium habitatio est in te.

1. A Korachite Psalm.

His dwelling is on the sacred hills ;

2. The Lord loveth Sion's gates more than all the tents of Jacob.

3. Of thee proud things are told, thou City of God !

4. 'Rahab and Babel I will name of those that know me ;
Lo ! the Philistines, Tyre and the Ethiopians were born here !

5. Of Sion men shall say,
Every man was born there ;
The Most High Himself hath established it ! '
6. In the books the Lord maketh record
Of the peoples and princes that were born there.
7. A dwelling of the joyous is the dwelling in thee.

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1. *Psalmus cantici* ; *cf.* Ps. xxix. 1.

Fundamenta is not 'foundations,' but that which has been set up on foundations, a firmly fixed dwelling. The *ejus* which renders a masculine suffix in the Hebrew must refer to *Dominus*. Jerusalem is the foundation of the Lord. It has been established on the 'sacred hills'—the eastern and western hills on which the city stood. If the foundation of God is the Temple rather than the city, as has often been held, the *montes sancti* might be a plural of amplification referring to the hill on which the Temple stood. Since, however, the psalm refers in general to the city of Jerusalem rather than to the Temple, we may take the *fundamenta* as=*civitas Dei*. 'Holy' here means chosen, set apart, inviolate. It is not meant that the hills were of themselves holy, apart from their being chosen as the site of the Holy City. The *portae Sion* are Jerusalem. God loves Jerusalem more than (*super*) all 'the dwellings of Jacob' (*i.e.*, the other districts of Palestine). He loves Jerusalem because it was 'the place which He had chosen, to set His name there.' Even though Yahweh loves the whole land of Canaan, His special possession, He loves Jerusalem most of all. The mystical explanation of the psalm (as expounded, for instance, by Theodoret) regards Sion as the heavenly Jerusalem.

3. The *gloriosa* are what is said in verses 4–7. *Dicta* ought rather to be *dicenda*. Jerusalem is the *civitas Dei* because it is God's dwelling.

4. Here the Lord Himself speaks. *Memor ero*, 'I will mention,' or 'I mention' (the Greek translators read in their Hebrew *'ezkor*, not, as in the Massoretic text, *'azkir*). Rahab is Egypt (*cf.* Ps. lxxx. 11 ; Is. xxx. 7). God reckons, or will reckon, Egypt and Babylon, the

ancient enemies of His people, among His worshippers, among those who acknowledge (*Scientes*) Him. There is here the same thought as in the Isaian prophecy, xix. 25 ; 'Blessed is my people Egypt and Assyria, the work of my hands.' When Yahweh reckons up His adherents He must include the Egyptians and Assyrians among them. Modern commentators find here a reference to a Jewish Diaspora in Egypt and in Babylonia with its fringe of Egyptian and Babylonian proselytes. It is not necessary, however, to find such concrete meaning in the verse. The thought here is rather that even among the heathen nations, which were most hostile to Yahweh and Jerusalem, there are, or will be, many loyal servants of the God of Israel. This would be quite intelligible from the Messianic point of view.

Alienigenae=Philistines (the *Allophyli* of Ps. lv. 1). The Philistines and the Tyrians and Ethiopians—like the Egyptians and Babylonians—are here among the friends of Yahweh, and, furthermore, are actually reckoned among the citizens of Jerusalem. *Fuerunt* renders the Greek ἐγενήθησαν (=ἐγεννήθησαν), 'were born' (Hebrew, *yulladh*). To be born in Jerusalem is to have the rights of a citizen of Jerusalem. Thus the city of God becomes a sort of universal metropolis, the centre of all the great heathen peoples who had been Israel's bitter foes in the ancient days (*cf.* Zach. viii. 3 ; Is. liv. 1–3 ; lx. 4 ; lxvi. 7*ff.*). Instead of the Hebrew singular, 'this one was born there' (*zeh yulladh sham*), the Greek, adapting itself to the context, has the plural, which is faithfully reproduced in the Latin. There may, however, be a contrast intended in the Hebrew between the *zeh*, 'this one,' of verse 4 and the *'ish w^e'ish, homo et homo* of verse 5. In verse 4 the meaning may be that this one and that one, but not all the members of the nations enumerated, possessed the citizenship of Sion, whereas every dweller in Sion itself was, in the fullest sense, a burgher of the Holy City. But the more natural interpretation is to find the same thought expressed in verses 4 and 5—in detail in verse 4, and more generally in verse 5.

5. The question does not look for a negative answer. It implies an attitude of wonder, as it were, at the greatness and importance of Sion (Jerusalem). *Sion* is not a nominative, but as we can readily see from the Hebrew, a dative ; it can be rendered 'of Sion,' or, 'in regard to Sion.' 'Of Sion men will say : Every man was born there.' The 'every man' may be, as suggested above, every dweller in Jerusalem, or it may be every man, generally. The latter sense is the more suitable, since it makes Sion the mother-city of the world. It is interesting to note that the usual text of the Septuagint reads here μήτηρ Σίων ἐρεῖ, etc. *Mater Sion dicet* (*cf.* Psalterium Rom.), and that the Greek text, as it stands, must be rendered : 'Sion is my mother shall a man say, and man was born in her.' Μήτηρ Σίων is, perhaps, a corruption of μὴ τῇ Σίων. Several modern commentators accept the Greek μήτηρ as correct—on the supposition

that *'em*, 'mother,' was omitted, by a very natural scribal error, from the Hebrew text. It would certainly fit in excellently with the context to have here an emphatic statement of the universal motherhood of Sion (*cf.* Gal. iv. 26, quoted by Theodoret). The early commentators who followed this Greek reading identified the *homo natus in ea*, with Christ, as the First-born of the New Jerusalem.

Homo et homo is a Hebraism meaning 'every man.' The citizenship of Sion is not a precarious blessing, for the Most High Himself maintains, and will maintain (Hebrew, *y^e^khon^e^neha*), the Holy City.

6. The Vulgate *in scripturis* raises the suggestion of 'Sacred Scriptures'—such prophetic writings as were already in existence at the time the psalm was composed. If we take *scripturae* in this sense there is here a reference to prophecies of a universal kingdom, with Sion as metropolis, which are now regarded as fulfilled or reaffirmed. But this interpretation of *scripturae* is unlikely. The Hebrew text speaks of the registering of the peoples by the Lord. When He goes through His Book of the Nations, He finds, as a sort of rubric referring to each nation, 'This one was born there' (*i.e.*, in Jerusalem. The Hebrew phrase is the same as in verse 4). The Hebrew runs: 'Yahweh reckoneth in the list of the peoples: This one was born there.' The 'Princes' are not mentioned in the Hebrew text. The Greeks transferred *sharim* ('singers') from verse 7 to this place, and read it as *sarim* ('princes'). If we must explain the Latin as it is, *populorum* and *principum* have to be taken as objects governed by *narrabit*.

The use of the genitive after *narrare* is an imitation of the Greek, which construes διηγεῖσθαι with the genitive. *Horum* resumes the genitives *populorum* and *principum*.

Fuerunt ought to be, as in verse 4, *nati sunt*.

For the idea of a Book of Life, or register of the Citizens of Sion, *cf.* Ps. cxxxviii. 16; Is. iv. 3; Ezech. xiii. 9; Matt. x. 30; Luke x. 20.

7. *Sicut* represents the *k^e^* of the Hebrew; it is not really the usual particle of comparison, for it means here that the two actions of singing and dancing *sharim k^e^ḥol^e^lim* are simultaneous. The singers, as has just been said, appear in the Vulgate in verse 6 as 'the princes' (*sarim*). *Ḥol^e^lim* means 'those who dance'—which is more concrete than its Latin representative *laetantes*. *Omnium habitatio est in te* implies a Hebrew text *kol m^e^'ono bakh* which is far better than the Massoretic *kol ma'yanai bakh*, 'all my fountains are in thee.' In the Massoretic text these words are taken as those of the rejoicing citizens of Sion, the 'fountains' being, perhaps, the fountains of salvation which flow unto them from their citizenship in Sion (*cf.* Is. xii. 3). The Vulgate means that all the citizens of Sion, all who have their dwelling in Sion, are full of gladness. Joyous gladness is an essential feature of the Messianic Kingdom. Every

member of that kingdom will be a citizen of Sion. Therein lies the pride and glory of the Holy City.

Jerome renders verses 5–7 thus :

Ad Sion autem dicetur,
Vir et vir natus est in ea,
et ipse fundavit eam Excelsus.
Dominus numeravit scribens populos :
ipse natus est in ea.
Et cantabunt quasi in choris :
Omnes fontes mei in te.

PSALM LXXXVII

THE DEPTHS OF SORROW

THE poet, speaking in his own person, or as representing Israel, likens himself to a man at the point of death (verse 4). In spirit he sees himself already among the dead—wholly forgotten, in the deepest depths of Sheol, cut off from God (vv. 5–7). He is avoided by his friends, and excluded from all intercourse with his fellows—as if he were a leper. (Exod. xiii. 46.)

In verses 8 and 15*ff*. he makes us to understand how he regards his affliction : he is a victim of God's anger, given up to God's terrors. His anguish of heart can only be explained as due to the darkness which has come from the turning away of God's face. The disease, whether it is the bodily disease of the poet or the condition of the Israelite nation, is, therefore, a proof of God's anger. Yet the psalmist neither proclaims his innocence (like Job) nor confesses his guilt. He simply asks : 'Why hast Thou withdrawn from me Thy favour ? ' Even though the billows of God's wrath sweep over him, and his soul is plunged in darkness, he still continues his prayer to Yahweh. Like Job, sorrow binds him all the more closely to the Lord. If he dies and descends to Sheol, that will bring no profit to Yahweh, for neither praise nor homage is given to the Lord by the 'Shades.' As long as the psalmist still lives, his prayers and homage will continue, so that Yahweh will gain more from his life than from his death. The conclusion of the poem shows none of that relief and renewed confidence which the utterance of complaint in most of the psalms seems to bring.

With this psalm should be read Psalms xxxvii, vi, cxli ; Isaias xxxviii. 10–20. The whole tone of the poem reminds one constantly of the Book of Job, and the psalm has, apparently, been greatly influenced by the style of Job. Its dependence on Job, and other features of the psalm incline one to regard it as a purely individual poem describing the sorrows, bodily and mental, of the psalmist. Yet, as pointed out in the notes, there are indications of a communal reference in the psalm, and the possibility cannot be quite excluded that it gives a picture of Israel's sorrows and griefs as a nation.

Apart from its obvious literary dependence on other psalms and on Job there is nothing in the psalm which helps to determine its date.

1. Canticum Psalmi, Filiis Core, in finem, pro Maheleth ad respondendum, intellectus Eman Ezrahitae.

2. Domine Deus salutis meæ : in die clamavi, et nocte coram te.

3. Intret in conspectu tuo oratio mea : inclina aurem tuam ad precem meam :

4. Quia repleta est malis anima mea : et vita mea inferno appropinquavit.

5. Æstimatus sum cum descendentibus in lacum : factus sum sicut homo sine adjutorio,

6. Inter mortuos liber.
Sicut vulnerati dormientes in sepulchris, quorum non es memor amplius : et ipsi de manu tua repulsi sunt.

7. Posuerunt me in lacu inferiori : in tenebrosis, et in umbra mortis.

8. Super me confirmatus est furor tuus : et omnes fluctus tuos induxisti super me.

9. Longe fecisti notos meos a me : posuerunt me abominationem sibi.
Traditus sum, et non egrediebar :

10. Oculi mei languerunt præ inopia.
Clamavi ad te Domine tota die : expandi ad te manus meas.

11. Numquid mortuis facies mirabilia : aut medici suscitabunt, et confitebuntur tibi ?

12. Numquid narrabit aliquis in sepulchro misericordiam tuam, et veritatem tuam in perditione ?

13. Numquid cognoscentur in tenebris mirabilia tua : et justitia tua in terra oblivionis ?

14. Et ego ad te Domine clamavi : et mane oratio mea præveniet te.

15. Ut quid Domine repellis orationem meam : avertis faciem tuam a me ?

16. Pauper sum ego, et in laboribus a juventute mea : exaltatus autem, humiliatus sum et conturbatus.

1. A Korachite psalm for the choir-master
of the antiphonal singers : a *Maskil*
of Heman, the Ezrachite.

2. O Lord, my rescuing God,
I cry to Thee by day,
In the night (is my cry) before Thee.

3. Let my prayer come before Thee ;
Bend Thy ear to my cry.

4. For my soul is filled with sorrow ;
And my life is nigh unto Sheol.

5. Even now am I numbered with them
that go down to the pit.
I am become as one without help ;

6. I am abandoned among the dead,
Like the slain in the tomb,
Whom Thou rememberest no more—
They are cut off from Thy hand.

7. In the deepest pit they have placed me ;
In darkness and the shadow of death.

8. Upon me Thy wrath lies heavily ;
All Thy breakers Thou hast made to
sweep o'er me.

9. My friends Thou holdest far from me ;
They look on me as a foul thing.
I am imprisoned and cannot go forth ;

10. My eye through grief groweth dim.
I cry to Thee, Lord, all day long ;
I spread out my hands unto Thee.

11. Dost Thou wondrous deeds with the dead?
Will the 'shades' rise again to praise
Thee ?

12. Do they tell in the grave of Thy kindness,
Of Thy truth in the land of the dead ?

13. Are Thy wonders made known amid
darkness,
Thy justice in the Land of Forgetfulness ?

14. But I cry unto Thee, O Lord ;
My prayer in the morning cometh before Thee.

15. Why rejectest Thou, O Lord, my prayer ?
Why turnest Thou from me Thy face ?

16. Poor am I and wretched since youth ;
Grown up, I have been cast down and
dismayed ;

17. In me transierunt iræ tuæ: et terrores tui conturbaverunt me.
18. Circumdederunt me sicut aqua tota die: circumdederunt me simul.
19. Elongasti a me amicum et proximum: et notos meos a miseria.

17. Over me Thy anger has swept;
Thy terrors dismay me.
18. They encompass me ever, like water
They encompass me wholly.
19. Far from me Thou puttest friend and neighbour,
And every acquaintance, through my wretchedness.

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1. The title describes the psalm as a Korachite psalm for the choir-master of a group of singers which is called in the text *Mahaleth ad respondendum* (Hebrew, *Maḥ^a^lath l^e^'amoth*). This name may possibly mean 'Antiphonal Choirs'—even though there is no trace of antiphonal singing in the psalm. The psalm is further described as 'a Maskil of Eman (Heman), the Ezrachite.' We hear of a Heman, a Korachite, who was a singer, in 1 Chron. vi. 33 (*cf.* 1 Chron. xxv. 5). Since, however, the Heman of this psalm-title is probably not to be identified with the Heman of 1 Chron. vi. 33, Heman the son of Zerach, the brother of Ethan (see next psalm), one of the four great wise men of the Solomonic era (1 Chron. ii. 6) is apparently referred to here. But Heman, the son of Zerach, was, like Ethan, of the tribe of Juda, and could not, therefore, be a Korachite, since the Korachites were of the tribe of Levi. It has been suggested that the Heman of 1 Chron. ii. 6 was by birth a Levite, and that he was adopted into the tribe of Juda. This suggestion has nothing to recommend it beyond its suitability as a means of explaining how a man could be both a Levite and a man of Juda. It has been suggested also that the title of the psalm does not identify Heman with the Korachites, but that it merely ascribes the musical setting of the psalm to the Korachites, and its literary composition to the wise man of Juda, Heman. The Septuagint has simply 'Heman, the Israelite' (just as, in Ps. lxxxviii it has 'Ethan the Israelite'). It is quite possible that the titles of this psalm and the following arose from an attempt to identify the two famous wise men Heman and Ethan (3 Kings iv. 31; 1 Chron. ii. 6) with two Levites bearing the same names.

Pro Mahaleth: *cf.* Ps. lii. 1.

Ad respondendum; even though the psalm is not suited for antiphonal rendering, it is not impossible that a choir especially connected with antiphonal singing may have been entrusted with the care of this psalm. Jerome renders the title: *Canticum carminis filiorum Chore victori per chorum ad praecinendum eruditionis Heman Ezraitae.*

2. The tearful prayer for help is supported by three reasons in verses 4–10, 11–13 and 14–19. With *nocte* we must supply a verb meaning also 'to cry.'

3. *In conspectu* for *in conspectum.*

4. *Anima*='self': *cf.* Ps. iii. 3. *Infernus* is Sheol, the Underworld. *Cf.* Ps. vi. 6.

5. *Aestimatus*: *cf.* Ps. xxvii. 1; cxlii. 7.

Sicut homo sine adjutorio; Hebrew, *K^e^ghebher 'en '^e^yal,* 'like a man (that should be strong, '*gebher*') without strength,' like a man in a fainting-fit. The phrase well describes the condition of a tottering State, but it would also fit the condition of an individual stricken down with a grievous illness or afflicted with a deadly and loathsome disease.

6. 'Free among the dead,' set apart from companions, sundered from all love and sympathy, utterly isolated and uncared for. *Vulneratus* here means 'slain': the psalmist has almost reached the unlovely freedom of the slain that sleep in their tombs, forgotten by all. The Hebrew has: 'Whom Thou (God) rememberest no more, for they are cut off from Thy hand.' They are cut off from God's hand because they are removed from His protection; Sheol lies, in a sense, outside the reach of God's hand (*i.e.*, His power). This verse would, perhaps, describe more appropriately the fate of a people than that of an individual, for while an individual could only speak of himself as sunk in Sheol and shut out from God by a great extension of poetic licence, he could thus describe metaphorically the condition of the nation.

7. *Posuerunt*: Hebrew, 'Thou hast put.' The *lacus inferior* is the deepest part of Sheol, the *infernus inferior* of Ps. lxxxv. 13. *In tenebrosis,* 'in dark places.': *cf.* Lam. iii. 6. *In umbra mortis* is a translation of *b^e^ṣalmaweth.* The Massoretic text has *bim^e^ṣol^o^th,* 'in the depths' (*cf.* Exod. xv. 5; Job xxvi. 5), as if Sheol were beneath waters.

8. *Cf.* Ps. xxxi. 4; xxxvii. 3. *Induxisti*: the Hebrew has: 'Thou hast humbled me with all Thy billows.' The Septuagint translators read *'innitha,* instead of the Massoretic *'innitha.*

9. The psalmist has become loathsome in the sight of his friends, like Job (*cf.* Job xix. 13*ff*, 19; Ps. xxx. 11). He is like one smitten with leprosy, or some such horrible disease, so that no one will venture to approach him. For the law dealing with lepers see Lev. xiii. 46–59. The individual interpretation of this verse is very natural.

Traditus sum: Hebrew, 'I am shut in and go not forth'—like one in prison. Jer. xxxii. 2, 3; Lam. iii. 7.

Languerunt: *cf.* Ps. xxxvii. 11: his eyes have become dim through misery—or it may be that he wishes to say that the blindness which often was associated with leprosy had already come upon him. *Cf.* Ps. vi. 8; xxx. 10; Job xvii. 7.

Clamavi . . . tota die: *Cf.* Ps. lxxxv. 3. *Expandi,* spread out the hands in attitude of prayer.

11. It is to the advantage of Yahweh that His servants enjoy a

long life on earth, since, on the one hand, that will indicate His greatness and power, and, on the other, it will secure to the Lord the continuance of His servants' praise. There is here implied the familiar Jewish teaching on Sheol—'the land of darkness and deep shadow where everlasting terror and disorder dwell.' Sheol is practically outside the domain of Yahweh's power, and its inhabitants offer Him neither homage nor praise. It is not to be expected that God will work the wonder of raising up those who are dead that they may praise Him.

Aut medici suscitabunt: the Hebrew has: 'Or will the Rephaim (=the dwellers of Sheol) arise to praise Thee?' with which agrees, in general, Jerome's rendering, *Aut gigantes surgent et confitebuntur tibi? Medici* has arisen from reading the Hebrew *RP'M* as *roph^e'im* (participle of *rapha'*, 'to heal,' hence *medici*) instead of the Massoretic *R^epha'im*, 'Shades.' *Suscitabunt*, which supposes the Hebrew *yaḳimu*, ought to be *surgent* (rendering the Massoretic *yaḳumu*). The Vulgate and Hebrew, though so different here in meaning, go back to the same primitive consonantal text.

12. The dead will not praise the loving-kindness or the truth of God (Ps. xxiv. 10). *Perditio* is here equivalent in the parallelism to *sepulchrum*.

13. 'Darkness' and 'Land of Forgetfulness' are names for Sheol. Neither God's wondrous deeds nor His justice will be remembered in the nether-world (*cf.* Job xiv. 21). It is, therefore, of no advantage to the Lord that the psalmist should perish; rather will Yahweh lose greatly by the death of His loyal friends: *Pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus*. For Sheol as Land of darkness *cf.* Eccle. ix. 5, 6, 10; Is. xxxviii. 18; Baruch ii. 17; Eccli. xvii. 26, 27.

14. The dead do not cry to Yahweh, but the psalmist cries to Him—*et ego*. The persistent prayer of the psalmist is a further reason why he should be heard. *Mane* suggests the urgency and intensity of the prayer.

15. *Orationem meam*: Hebrew, 'my soul'; but as the psalmist's prayer is for help and rescue, the Vulgate and Massoretic texts are fundamentally identical in meaning. The Greek προσευχήν is perhaps, a corruption of ψυχήν. Jerome has *Quare abjicis animam meam*.

16. If the psalm is a communal poem, the 'youth' in question is the period of the Exodus (*cf.* Ps. cxxviii. 1). If it is the song of an individual, the meaning must be that the disease has afflicted him from the days of his youth. Since, however, it is not likely that a loathsome disease like leprosy could have troubled a man from his early youth, this verse furnishes a further reason for regarding the psalm as a communal poem. Possibly the verse means merely that the psalmist has suffered from bodily afflictions in general—not necessarily leprosy—since his youth.

In laboribus: the corresponding Hebrew means, in a weakly, or dying, condition.

Exaltatus autem humiliatis sum: the Hebrew has: 'I have borne Thy terrors,' *nasa'thi 'emekha* (Jerome, *Portavi furorem tuum*). The Septuagint translators read *nisse'thi 'amukh*. For the 'dread' compare Gen. xv. 12.

Conturbatus: the meaning of the Hebrew *'aphunah* is uncertain.

17. *Cf.* Ps. xli. 8: *Fluctus tui super me transierunt*. *Cf.* Ps. xvii, 5; xvi. 11; xxi. 12, 16; cvi. 10, 11, 12; Jon. ii. 3, 5.

18. The comparison with water arises from the 'waves' of the preceding verse.

19. See above, verse 9. Compare Job xix. 13.

A miseria: the Massoretic text has *maḥshakh*, 'darkness'—'My friends are darkness,' *i.e.*, only darkness (=blindness; *cf.* verse 10) remains my friend. *A miseria* translates *meḥoshekh*, 'from darkness'—the darkness being identified with wretchedness. Neither the Massoretic reading nor the Vulgate text is satisfactory. If the consonants of the Hebrew text were otherwise grouped they could be made to read *m^e^yudda'im ḥasakh*='acquaintances He hath held back,' which would make a good parallel to *elongasti a me amicum et proximum*. Jerome renders: *Notos meos abstulisti*.

PSALM LXXXVIII

AN ELEGY ON THE DECLINE OF THE DAVIDIC DYNASTY

THIS psalm is, for the most part, a complaint over the apparent failure of the House of David. The poem was composed in a time of political disaster. The House of David seems to be, for the moment, overthrown. The walls and fortifications of Jerusalem have been reduced to ruins. Everywhere is disgrace and shame. The precise period of Jewish history which is reflected in the psalm cannot be determined, but there is less reason for ascribing the poem to the Maccabean, than to the pre-Restoration, post-Exilic period. The Messianic outlook of the psalm is not that of the Maccabean period.

In the misery of the time the psalmist seeks to comfort his people with the thought of Yahweh's power and His fidelity to His promises. He begins in hymn-like style with the praise of God's kindness and truth. Sad as the time is, there is still ground for hope. The Lord has promised great things to David, and the things which He has promised must come to pass, for the graciousness and truth of Yahweh are as firm as the heavens (vv. 2–5).

In verses 6–18 the heavens burst forth into a hymn of praise in which the might and the fidelity of Yahweh are extolled. Yahweh is greater than all the angels. There is none like Him in the heavens. By His might He subdued the powers of Chaos, and built up the heavens and the earth. The mountains rejoice at His strength, for His arm only is strong. Yet not by force does He rule : kindness and truth are the stay of His throne. In spite of all, then, Israel must be happy and hopeful, for Yahweh is Israel's God and King, and the shout of joy at Yahweh's great festivals is yet known in the land. Once again will the horn of Israel be upraised. 'Yea,' answer the people in verse 19, 'our King whom we look for, our Shield, is the possession of the mighty and faithful God, Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel.'

In verses 20–38 the psalmist reflects at length on the ancient Messianic oracles, and, above all, on the promise of Nathan to David (2 Kings vii). This section of the poem is a poetic paraphrase of the oracle of Nathan. The Davidic Dynasty is depicted as the dynasty to which the Messianic Kingdom is to be entrusted, and that Kingdom is represented chiefly as an external world-power. Its King is the 'first-born' and the mightiest of the kings of earth (*cf.* Ps. ii. 7 ;

lxxi. 11). So firmly is the Messianic hope attached to the House of David that even the transgression of Davidic kings will not make void the promise made through Nathan to David. Transgressing kings will be punished, but the pact with David will stand firm. What God has once sworn He will not repent of. The Throne of David will be firm as long as sun and moon endure. He that has sworn is God, and God—' the Witness in heaven '—is true.

In verses 39–46 the psalmist utters his complaint. The present bitterly contrasts with all the glorious fortune that God had promised through Nathan. The King of Israel has been overthrown : Jerusalem is in ruins : the hostile peoples round about show their contempt for the city and the people, and are not rebuked. God has raised the enemies of the House of David aloft, and has gladdened all its foes. The sharp sword of the Davidic king God has turned aside in battle, and the throne of David, which was to stand firm as heaven, God has cast down. The days of Israel's glory have been shortened, and she is covered with shame.

In verses 47–52 the psalmist prays almost peremptorily for a change in the attitude of God. The life of men is short, and if God does not make haste, the end of Israel will come speedily. Yahweh is reminded urgently, and indeed, as it were, threateningly, of His promises. Surely God will not forget His words—the words which He swore to David ! Surely He will not permit the enemies of His people to mock Israel and Israel's God. Surely He will requite the scorn with which the Gentiles have scorned the Davidic Dynasty !

Verse 53 is the Doxology marking the close of the third book of the Psalms.

1. Intellectus Ethan Ezrahitæ.	1. A Maskil of Ethan, the Ezrachite
	(Introduction)
2. Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo. In generationem et generationem annuntiabo veritatem tuam in ore meo.	2. The kindness of the Lord I will evermore sing ; Through the ages my mouth will proclaim Thy Truth.
3. Quoniam dixisti : In æternum misericordia ædificabitur in cœlis : præparabitur veritas tua in eis.	3. For Thou saidst : ' Kindness for ever shall abide in heaven ' ; There Thy truth shall stand firm.
4. Disposui testamentum electis meis, juravi David servo meo :	4. ' I made a covenant with my chosen ones ; I swore unto David my servant.
5. Usque in æternum præparabo semen tuum. Et ædificabo in generationem et generationem sedem tuam.	5. ' I will establish for ever thy seed. I will build up thy throne for ever.'
	(Hymn of the heavens)
6. Confitebuntur cœli mirabilia tua Domine : etenim veritatem tuam in ecclesia sanctorum.	6. The heavens proclaimed Thy wonders, O Lord, And Thy truth in the assembly of the Holy Ones.

7. Quoniam quis in nubibus æquabitur Domino : similis erit Deo in filiis Dei ?

8. Deus, qui glorificatur in consilio sanctorum : magnus et terribilis super omnes qui in circuitu ejus sunt.
9. Domine Deus virtutum quis similis tibi ? potens es Domine, et veritas tua in circuitu tuo.
10. Tu dominaris potestati maris : motum autem fluctuum ejus tu mitigas.
11. Tu humiliasti sicut vulneratum, superbum : in brachio virtutis tuæ dispersisti inimicos tuos.
12. Tui sunt cœli, et tua est terra, orbem terræ et plenitudinem ejus tu fundasti :

13. Aquilonem, et mare tu creasti.
Thabor et Hermon in nomine tuo exsultabunt :
14. Tuum brachium cum potentia.
Firmetur manus tua, et exaltetur dextera tua :
15. Justitia et judicium præparatio sedis tuæ.
Misericordia et vertas præcedent faciem tuam :
16. Beatus populus, qui scit jubilationem.
Domine, in lumine vultus tui ambulabunt.
17. Et in nomine tuo exsultabunt tota die : et in justitia tua exaltabuntur.
18. Quoniam gloria virtutis eorum tu es : et in beneplacito tuo exaltabitur cornu nostrum.

19. Quia Domini est assumptio nostra : et sancti Israel regis nostri.

20. Tunc locutus es in visione sanctis tuis, et dixisti : Posui adjutorium in potente : et exaltavi electum de plebe mea.

21. Inveni David servum meum : oleo sancto meo unxi eum.
22. Manus enim mea auxiliabitur ei : et brachium meum confortabit eum.

7. For who in the clouds is equal to the Lord ?
Who is like God among the sons of God ?
8. A God who is feared in the council of Holy Ones,
Mighty and terrible over all that surround Him !
9. Lord God of the battle-hosts who is like Thee ?
Strong art Thou, Lord, encircled with Truth ;
10. Thou lordest it over the might of the Sea ;
The tumult of its waves Thou calmest.

11. Thou bowest the Proud One like one transfixed ;
With Thy mighty arm Thou scatterest Thy foes.
12. Thine are the heavens, and Thine is the earth ;
All the earth and what fills it Thou hast established ;
13. The North and the Sea Thou hast fashioned :
Thabor and Hermon rejoice at Thy name.
14. Thine is the arm with hero-strength ;
Strong is Thy hand ; high uplifted Thy right hand :

15. Justice and right are the stay of Thy throne ;
Kindness and Truth go before Thee.

16. Happy the people who knoweth the festival cry,
That walketh, O Lord, in the light of Thy face !
17. Because of Thy name they ever rejoice ;
In Thy justice they are made great.

18. For Thou art their mighty glory ;
In Thy favour our horn is uplifted ;

(The People)
19. For to the Lord belongeth our Shield,
To the Holy One of Israel our King.

(The Oracle)
20. Once Thou spakest in vision to Thy pious ones :
' On a mighty one I have put salvation ;
A chosen one from my people I have raised up.
21. I have found my servant David,
I have anointed him with my holy oil ;
22. My hand will give him help,
And my arm will make him strong ;

23. Nihil proficiet inimicus in eo, et filius iniquitatis non apponet nocere ei.
24. Et concidam a facie ipsius inimicos ejus : et odientes eum in fugam convertam.
25. Et veritas mea, et misericordia mea cum ipso : et in nomine meo exaltabitur cornu ejus.

26. Et ponam in mari manum ejus : et in fluminibus dexteram ejus.
27. Ipse invocabit me : Pater meus es tu : Deus meus, et susceptor salutis meæ.
28. Et ego primogenitum ponam illum excelsum præ regibus terræ.
29. In æternum servabo illi misericordiam meam : et testamentum meum fidele ipsi.
30. Et ponam in sæculum sæculi semen ejus : et thronum ejus sicut dies cœli.

31. Si autem dereliquerint filii ejus legem meam : et in judiciis meis non ambulaverint :
32. Si justitias meas profanaverint : et mandata mea non custodierint :
33. Visitabo in virga iniquitates eorum : et in verberibus peccata eorum.
34. Misericordiam autem meam non dispergam ab eo : neque nocebo in veritate mea :
35. Neque profanabo testamentum meum : et quæ procedunt de labiis meis, non faciam irrita.
36. Semel juravi in sancto meo, si David mentiar :
37. Semen ejus in æternum manebit.
38. Et thronus ejus sicut sol in conspectu meo, et sicut luna perfecta in æternum : et testis in cœlo fidelis.

39. Tu vero repulisti et despexisti : distulisti christum tuum.
40. Evertisti testamentum servi tui : profanasti in terra Sanctuarium ejus.

41. Destruxisti omnes sepes ejus : posuisti firmamentum ejus formidinem.

23. The foe will have no power against him ;
No godless one shall bring him evil.

24. I will cut down before him his foes,
Those who hate him I will drive in headlong flight ;
25. My Truth and my Favour shall be with him ;
And in my name his horn will be upraised :
26. I will set his power on the Sea,
And his right hand on the rivers.

27. He shall address me : "My Father art Thou,
My God and the source of my safety."
28. I will make him the first-born,
The highest of the kings of earth ;

29. I will keep for him ever my favour ;
My covenant with him shall stand firm ;

30. I will maintain for ever his seed,
And his throne as long as heaven endureth :

31. 'But if his sons abandon my Law ;
If they walk no more in my judgments,

32. If they profane my decrees,
And keep not my commands,

33. I will visit their sins with the rod,
And their evil doings with smitings ;

34. Yet my favour I will not turn from him,
Nor will I violate my truth.

35. I will not profane my covenant,
Nor make vain the words of my lips.

36. Once I sware by my holiness :
To David I will not lie :
37. His seed shall abide for ever

38. And his throne before me, like the sun,
And like the moon, abiding for ever.
And the Witness in heaven is true.'

(Complaint)

39. But Thou hast despised and rejected,
Hast cast off Thy Anointed.

40. The pact with Thy servant Thou hast contemned.
Thou hast cast to the ground his shrine :
41. Thou hast broken down all his walls,
Hast laid his strong places in ruins.

42. Diripuerunt eum omnes transeuntes viam: factus est opprobrium vicinis suis.
43. Exaltasti dexteram deprimentium eum: lætificasti omnes inimicos ejus.
44. Avertisti adjutorium gladii ejus: et non es auxiliatus ei in bello.
45. Destruxisti eum ab emundatione: et sedem ejus in terram collisisti.
46. Minorasti dies temporis ejus: perfudisti eum confusione.

47. Usquequo Domine avertis in finem: exardescet sicut ignis ira tua?

48. Memorare quæ mea substantia: numquid enim vane constituisti omnes filios hominum?
49. Quis est homo, qui vivet, et non videbit mortem: eruet animam suam de manu inferi?

50. Ubi sunt misericordiæ tuæ antiquæ Domine, sicut jurasti David in veritate tua?
51. Memor esto Domine opprobrii servorum tuorum (quod continui in sinu meo) multarum Gentium.
52. Quod exprobraverunt inimici tui Domine, quod exprobraverunt commutationem Christi tui.

53. Benedictus Dominus in æternum: fiat, fiat.

42. All who pass by the way despoil him;
To his neighbours he has become a byeword.
43. Thou hast uplifted the right hand of his oppressors,
Hast gladdened all his foes:
44. Thou hast turned back his strong sword,
Hast not helped him in battle:

45. Thou hast stripped him of his glory,
Hast cast to the earth his throne:

46. Thou hast shortened the days of his youth,
Hast covered him with shame.

(Petition)

47. How long, O Lord? Wilt Thou turn away for ever?
(How long) will Thy wrath burn like fire?
48. Remember, O Lord, of what nature I am,
How weak Thou hast made all the sons of men!

49. Who is the man that liveth, and seeth not death?
Who rescueth his soul from the power of Sheol?
50. Where are Thy old-time favours, O Lord?
Which once Thou swarest in Thy truth to David?
51. Give thought, O Lord, to the shame of Thy servants:
Which I bear in my bosom from peoples many:
52. Wherewith, O Lord, Thy enemies reviled,
Wherewith they reviled Thy Anointed's successor.

(Doxology)

53. Blessed be the Lord for ever. Amen. Amen.

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1. *Intellectus Ethan*: the psalm is a *Maskil* (see Ps. xli. 1) of Ethan the Ezrachite. In 3 Kings iv. 31 Ethan appears as one of the famous wise men of Israel, and in 1 Chron. ii. 6, he is named as a son of Zerach and brother of Heman, and as a member of the tribe of Juda. *Cf.* Ps. lxxxvii. 1.

2. The chief purpose of the psalmist is not to extol the kind deeds of the Lord, but rather, by praise of God's graciousness and fidelity, to move Him to show favour and give help to the now failing House of David. God once promised to that House unending rule, and surely He will not make void His promise! The actual situation in Israel is full of gloom, and the psalmist naturally looks for comfort to the great ancient promises made to the dynasty of David. The

promise which he has chiefly in view is that which was made through Nathan (2 Kings vii. 5–16).

3. *Dixisti* is obviously better than the Massoretic, '*I* said.'

Aedificabitur, 'shall stand firm.' The second part of the verse reads in Hebrew: 'The heavens—therein Thou establishest Thy truth.' *In coelis* ought, therefore, to be *coeli*, and it should be read with what follows, *praeparabitur*, etc. *In eis* resumes *coeli* in Hebrew fashion. For *praeparare* see Ps. xxiii. 2.

4. *Testamentum*=covenant. The reference is to the promise made by Nathan.

5. This is the substance of Nathan's promise. *Praeparabo*, 'I will firmly establish' (Hebrew *'akhin*).

6. In verse 20 the psalmist returns to the promise of Nathan. In verses 6–18 he makes the heavens to chant a hymn in praise of God—the mighty God who has power to fulfil his promises. In verse 19 the people are represented as taking up the hymn on their own account.

Confitebuntur is here probably to be taken as equivalent to a past tense. The hymn of heaven may be regarded as a sort of echo of Nathan's words to David. The *mirabilia* are the wondrous deeds which Yahweh performed for Israel and David. Since the heavens here chant the praises of God, we may assume that the *ecclesia sanctorum* (*ḳ^ehal ḳ^edhoshim*)=the angels (*cf.* verse 8). Note that the Hebrew word here rendered by *sancti* is not the quasi-technical *ḥ^asidhim*, but *ḳ^edhoshim*; the *sancti* are not the 'pious,' but the 'holy ones' (the angels).

7. This is the reason of Heaven's praise. *In filiis Dei* is parallel to *in nubibus*, and, as dwellers in heaven ('the clouds') the *filii* are the angels. Since the angels belong to the *'elim* (see Ps. xxviii. 1) they are rightly called *b^ene 'Elim* (*filii Dei*).

8. The *sancti* are here again the *ḳ^edhoshim*, the angels. The *omnes qui in circuitu sunt* are obviously also the angels.

9. *Veritas tua in circuitu tuo* is a strange phrase: perhaps it means that God's *Veritas* is inseparable from Him.

10, 11: the reference here may be to the victory of God over the primeval monster of Chaos. *Superbum* represents the Hebrew *Rahabh* (which occurs as an epithet of Egypt, Ps. lxxxvi. 4). *Vulneratum*= transfixed.

Brachium virtutis tuae='Thy strong arm': compare such familiar constructions as *Deus salutis meae*; *sacrificium justitiae*, etc. (See Introd. p. xlvi. No. 7.)

13. *Aquilonem et mare*: *mare* is the Mediterranean, and hence, the West. We should expect rather a word for South. The Septuagint translators read here *w^eyam*, 'and the Sea,' instead of the Massoretic *w^eyamin*, 'and the South.' The chief mountains of Palestine, Thabor and Hermon, rejoice at the manifestation of God's glory in

creation—just as do the stars of morning in Job xxxviii. 7. *Cf.* Ps. lxxviii. 6 ; lxiv. 13.

14. *Tuum* is put emphatically at the beginning—'Thine alone is the arm.' *Cum potentia* is equivalent to an adjective, 'mighty.'

15. *Praeparatio*='stay, support.' Graciousness and Truth are either heralds that go before the Lord, or ministering spirits that attend at His throne. *Cf.* Ps. xlii. 3 ; lxxxiv. 14.

16, 17. How blessed is Israel in possessing Yahweh as its God and King !

Jubilatio is the glad cry of festival rejoicing—songs of praise sung with enthusiastic vehemence (*cf.* Ps. cl. 5). The light of God's face shines on those to whom God is gracious. It is they who walk in the light of God's face that know the shout, or song, of joy.

Tota die=always.

Exaltabuntur : they are raised up above others ; they increase in power.

18. *Gloria virtutis eorum,* 'their mighty glory' (See above verse 11). *In beneplacito tuo,* 'by Thy favour.' The Lord will give to Israel glory and power once more. The horn is a symbol of strength (Ps. lxxiv. 5).

19. The people here take up the chant. *Assumptio*='protection.' The Hebrew has : 'To Yahweh belongeth our shield.' In the second half of the verse the genitives in the Vulgate are, apparently, in apposition to *Domini*—as if Yahweh were called 'the Holy One of Israel' (an Isaian epithet of God) and also 'our King.' In the Hebrew, however, 'Our King' is a nominative, in apposition to 'Our Shield' (*Assumptio nostra*). The sense is :

> 'To Yahweh belongeth our Shield,
> To the Holy One of Israel (belongeth) our King.'

The King is the shield of Israel. The reference is, apparently, to the ideal King of prophecy, who, because he has been announced in prophecy, is declared to belong to the Lord.

20. The hymn to God has reached its conclusion in the mention of the Messianic King, and the psalmist resumes the theme of verses 4–5. He goes on now to develop the implications of Nathan's prophecy. Up to verse 29 he deals with the divine election of David as king, and in verses 30–38 he deals with the prophecy of the permanence of David's throne.

Verse 20 refers to 2 Kings vii (*cf.* 1 Chron. xvii. 15). The *sancti* (*ḥ^a^sidhim*) are either David and Nathan, or the Israelite people as recipients of the divine oracle concerning David's House. *In visione*= through prophecy.

Posui adjutorium in potente, 'I place (my) help in a strong one' (*gibbor, i.e.,* David), 'I make a strong one the instrument by which I send help to my people.' David is the *electus.*

21. *Cf.* 1 Kings xvi. 1–13.

22. The hand of Yahweh will never leave David without help.

23. *Proficiet*: the Hebrew has: 'No enemy shall deceive him' (so also Jerome; *non decipiet inimicus eum*). The Septuagint translators took *nasha'* here as meaning 'lend on usury'; in the context, however, the verb *nasha'* obviously ought to be taken as meaning 'to deceive,' parallel (to *nocere*). The Vulgate may be rendered: 'An enemy shall have no success against him.'

Filius iniquitatis, 'an evildoer.' *Non apponet*, shall not continue to injure him, shall not again injure him. For the construction see Ps. vi. 5. The Hebrew text has simply, 'No evildoer shall humble him' (*cf.* 2 Kings vii. 14). The *apponet* (see Introd. p. xlv) has come in here from the parallel in 2 Kings vii. 10 which is rendered in the Vulgate: *Nec addent filii iniquitatis ut affligant eum sicut prius.*

25. *Exaltabitur cornu*: *Cf.* Ps. lxxiv. 5.

26. The wide extent of the Davidic empire is here recalled, as in Ps. lxxi. 8: *Dominabitur a mari usque ad mare, et a flumine usque ad terminos orbis terrarum.* The 'Sea' is the Mediterranean, and the 'rivers' are the Euphrates and Tigris (though we should expect here the singular, referring to the Euphrates only). *Manus* means 'power, authority.'

27. For the words compare 2 Kings vii. 14. *Susceptor*: in Hebrew, 'Rock.' *Cf.* Ps. iii. 4.

28. As Israel is the 'first-born' of the peoples (Exod. iv. 22), so is David the 'first-born' of kings, the first and most powerful among them. 'First-born' implies here pre-eminence rather than priority, as in Col. i. 15. *Cf.* Hebr. i. 6.

29. *Testamentum*='covenant.' *Fidele*; 'steadfast,' 'abiding.' 'My covenant with him (*ipsi*) will stand firm.'

30. The 'days of heaven'=as long as heaven endures. *Cf.* Deut. xi. 21.

34. *Dispergam*, 'withdraw.' Jerome has, *Non auferam.* God will uphold the prophecy made to David, in spite of the sins of his posterity. The Hebrew *'aphir* ought to be emended into *'asir*, which is fairly represented by *dispergam.*

Neque nocebo in veritate mea: 'I will not do injury to my Truth'; *i.e.*, I will not deny it, I will maintain it inviolate.

36. *Semel*='once for all.' *In sancto meo*, 'by my holiness.' *Si . . . mentiar*, 'I will not speak falsely.' The phrase, like most asseverations in Hebrew, is elliptical—'If I lie, may so and so befall me!' *Cf.* Introd. p. xlvi. n. 5.

37. The oath begins here.

38. *Cf.* 1 Kings vii. 16. The throne of David shall subsist as long as sun and moon endure (*cf.* Ps. lxxi. 5). *Perfecta* is, apparently, an attribute of *luna* in the Vulgate. It renders a Hebrew finite verb which refers to 'throne': like the moon it (the throne) stands firm

for ever. We can get this sense fairly well by regarding *perfecta* as an attribute of *sedes* (supplied from the context).

The 'Witness in heaven' is Yahweh Himself.

39. In glaring contrast with the glorious promise of Nathan is the present lot of Israel and of David's house. The psalmist complains about this contrast up to verse 46, and in verses 47–52 he prays for its removal.

Tu vero: Thou, the Author of the promise, hast made it void! *Distulisti*, 'Thou hast rejected.' The *Christus* is primarily the Anointed, the King sprung from Davidic stock; but it may here be taken, perhaps, as=the House of David together with the people.

40. *Profanasti in terram*: *Cf.* Ps. lxxiii. 7. *Sanctuarium*; the Hebrew has *nezer*, 'crown,' 'diadem.' In Ps. cxxxi. 18 *nezer* is represented by *sanctificatio*. Apparently in the mind of the Latin translators *sanctuarium* is the Temple.

41. The *ejus* here and in the following verses refers to the *Christus*. The *sepes* and *firmamentum* are the fortifications of Jerusalem built by David.

Formidinem: the Hebrew has, 'Thou hast reduced his fortifications to ruins.' The Hebrew *m^e^ḥittah* (='ruins') is derived from *ḥathath*, to destroy: a derived sense of this word is 'to terrify,' 'to break one's courage.' Regarded by the Greek translators as connected with the secondary meaning of *ḥathath*, *m^e^ḥittah* was taken to mean 'that which excites terror.' Jerome has accepted the view of the Septuagint, and rendered, *Posuisti munitiones ejus in pavorem.* The ruins of the ancient fortifications are calculated to arouse terror because of the vastness of their destruction.

42. The neighbours are, probably, the Edomites and Arabians who were especially hostile to the post-Exilic community. Verses 41–42 are based on Ps. lxxix. 13.

44. *Adjutorium gladii*: the Hebrew has, 'the flint ('rock') of his sword,' *i.e.*, his sword which is as hard as flint (*cf.* Is. v. 28). The Vulgate means, 'his helping sword,' the sword which might have brought him help—whether the King's own sword, or the sword of others.

45. *Ab emundatione*: the Greek translators took *miṭṭ^o^har* as=*min ṭ^o^har*, 'away from cleansing,' and regarded the verse as asserting the destruction of the Levitical system: if the Levitical purifications could not be carried out, that implied the impossibility of the Temple-cult generally. Baethgen proposes to read, instead of *miṭṭ^o^haro, maṭṭeh miyadho*, 'the sceptre from his hand.' This would give a good parallelism with *Et sedem ejus in terram collisisti.*

46. The verse does not refer merely to David, but to the Davidic dynasty and to Israel.

47–52. Prayer for help. Verse 47 is almost verbatim from

Ps. lxxviii. 5. Surely the present anger of the Lord will not last for ever!

48. *Quae mea substantia*: neither Massoretic text nor Vulgate is here satisfactory. Possibly the original text was, *z^e^khor 'adhonai mah ḥadhel 'ani*, 'Remember, O Lord, how short-lived I am.' *Substantia*= 'life, being.' *Cf.* Ps. xxxviii. 6; *Substantia mea tanquam nihilum ante te.*

Numquid, etc.; surely Yahweh has not fashioned a whole generation to make it live in misery, and without hope of the fulfilment of His promises!

49. It is true that all men must die, but it is not true that the lives of all men must be hopeless and futile.

50. God cannot forget His former graciousness to the throne of David, nor can He set aside His sworn promise.

51. *Opprobrium servorum tuorum*, 'the shame which Thy servants have to bear'; it is a shame which comes from many peoples. *Cf.* Ps. lxxviii. 12: *Redde vicinis nostris septuplum in sinu eorum*, and see note on that verse.

It would seem as if the Anointed speaks in verses 51–52 on his own behalf and on behalf of the people. But it is possible that the psalmist speaks himself in the first person.

52. *Commutationem*: Hebrew, 'footsteps'—the footsteps of the Anointed (*Mashiaḥ*) may be the hopes and ambitions concerning the Messias current among the people since the days of David. In the Latin *commutatio* seems to mean 'successor,' one that takes the place of another (*cf.* Caliph=Arabic Khalifah=Successor [of Mohammed]). The word here used in the Massoretic text, *'iḳḳ^e^bhoth* is from the same root as *'eḳebh*, 'reward,' 'requital,' 'exchange,' which the Greek translators read here.

53. The Doxology marks the close of the third Book of Psalms. For the other parallel endings see Ps. xl. 14; lxxi. 19; cv. 48.

PSALM LXXXIX

THE ETERNITY OF GOD AND THE FLEETINGNESS OF MAN

THE poet begins with the pious confession that the Lord is Israel's Helper in every need, and then goes on to speak of the eternity of God as if he were beginning a hymn to that eternity. But his words are not the beginning of a hymn. He is interested for the moment in the eternity of God merely because he will contrast with it the weakness and transitoriness of man. On the one side is the mighty God Who existed before the universe was formed, before Whom a thousand years are but as a day, or as the night-watch that passes unnoticed: on the other side is man, sprung from the dust and returning thereto after a few fleeting years—man whose generations follow each other in ceaseless change, springing up, like the grass which shoots in the morning, dries up in the sunshine, and is dead before the sunset. *Cf.* Is. xl. 6; Job xiv. 1.

Yet not so much with the shortness of man's life is the psalmist concerned, as with the cause of that shortness—which is sin. Our chief sorrow is that we are under the curse of sin, and that we must, therefore, constantly endure God's wrath during our brief, sad life. Through sin death entered into the world, for by sin was God made angry. Because of sin, then, our life is a thing of 70 to 80 years, and all that it has to boast of is striving and tears.

It is best for us to realise that sin is the cause of sorrow and death. It is well, therefore, to count up our days, and to realise the shortness of life, and thus to fill our hearts with wisdom, and due fear of the Lord.

God will give heed to our prayers, says the psalmist, speaking for Israel and for himself, and will turn to us again with kindness; in spite of the shortness and sorrows of life, we shall see soon a dawn of gladness, after a night of trouble.

In the concluding section 15–17 the psalmist prays that Israel, so sorely tried in the Exile, may see once more the favour of Yahweh, and thus be made to forget all the dark days of her grief. He prays that the glory of the Lord may be seen once again in the land of Israel, and that Yahweh may once again rule in the midst of His people, and guide them to success.

The poem is, in a fashion, a meditation on the text of Gen. iii. 19, and is thus, in a special way associated with Moses. Yet, though the majestic tone of the psalm makes it well worthy of Moses, the

apparent references to the post-Exilic lot of Israel, and the echoes of Is. xl. 6 and Job xiv. 1 contained in the psalm make its ascription to Moses at least very doubtful.

1. Oratio Moysi hominis Dei.

Domine, refugium factus es nobis : a generatione in generationem.
2. Priusquam montes fierent, aut formaretur terra et orbis : a sæculo et usque in sæculum tu es Deus.
3. Ne avertas hominem in humilitatem : et dixisti : Convertimini filii hominum.
4. Quoniam mille anni ante oculos tuos, tamquam dies hesterna, quæ præteriit,
Et custodia in nocte,
5. Quæ pro nihilo habentur, eorum anni erunt.
6. Mane sicut herba transeat, mane floreat, et transeat : vespere decidat, induret et arescat.

7. Quia defecimus in ira tua, et in furore tuo turbati sumus.
8. Posuisti iniquitates nostras in conspectu tuo : sæculum nostrum in illuminatione vultus tui.
9. Quoniam omnes dies nostri defecerunt : et in ira tua defecimus.
Anni nostri sicut aranea meditabuntur :
10. Dies anorum nostrorum in ipsis, septuaginta anni.
Si autem in potentatibus, octaginta anni : et amplius eorum, labor et dolor.
Quoniam supervenit mansuetudo : et corripiemur.

11. Quis novit potestatem iræ tuæ :

12. Et præ timore tuo iram tuam dinumerare ?
Dexteram tuam sic notam fac : et eruditos corde in sapientia.
13. Convertere Domine usquequo ? et deprecabilis esto super servos tuos.
14. Repleti sumus mane misericordia tua : et exsultavimus, et delectati sumus omnibus diebus nostris.

1. A Prayer of Moses, the Man of God.

O Lord, Thou wast a refuge for us,
Through all the ages.

2. Before the hills were made, and earth and universe were formed
Thou wast, O God, and Thou abidest for ever.
3. To dust Thou bringest man again :
Thou speakest : 'Return, ye sons of men !'
4. For a thousand years before Thee
Are like vanished yesterday, like a night-watch ;

5. Of no account are their years ;

6. Like grass which shooteth,
In the morning it shooteth, and groweth ;
In the evening it falleth, becometh hard, and withereth.

7. Yea, we fade away through Thy anger,
We are dismayed by Thy wrath.
8. Our sins Thou keepest before Thee,
Our life in the light of Thy face.

9. For all our days vanish in Thy wrath,
Our years we consume like a sigh.

10. The days of our life—seventy years are they ;
Eighty they are at the best ;
And all beyond that is toil and trouble :
For weakness o'ercometh us,
Away we are snatched.

11. Who knoweth the might of Thy anger,
And Thy wrath, as Thy fear demandeth ?
12. Teach us to reckon our days,
That we in our hearts may be wise.

13. Turn to us Lord. How long ?
Be gracious once more to Thy servants ;

14. Let us be sated with Thy favours in the morning ;
That we may rejoice and be glad all our days ;

15. Lætati sumus pro diebus, quibus nos humiliasti: annis, quibus vidimus mala.

16. Respice in servos tuos, et in opera tua: et dirige filios eorum.

17. Et sit splendor Domini Dei nostri super nos, et opera manuum nostrarum dirige super nos: et opus manuum nostrarum dirige.

15. Let us rejoice for the days when Thou humbledst us,
For the years when we looked on misfortune!

16. Look down on Thy servants, and on Thy work,
And guide Thou their children.

17. Let the glory of the Lord Our God be upon us:
Give success to the work of our hands;
Let the work of our hands have success!

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1. 'Man of God' is the title of Moses in Deut. xxxiii. 1, and Jos. xiv. 6: other prophets and messengers of God also receive this title; *cf.* Judges xiii. 6; 1 Kings ii. 27. This is the only psalm ascribed to Moses, and if it is really Mosaic in origin it must have undergone some editorial modification, for the concluding section seems to contain references to the Exile. Modern Protestant critics regard the whole psalm as post-Exilic. St. Jerome ascribes not merely this psalm but also Psalms xc–xcix (see Jer. Ep. cxl, c. 2) to Moses.

The psalm begins by thanking the Lord for His goodness in showing Himself a protection and shelter to Israel (*nobis*) throughout the generations.

2. The thought of the generations leads the psalmist on to reflect on the eternity of God. Before the 'eternal hills,' and before even the earth itself (*terra et orbis=orbis terrae*) were fashioned, God existed, and He will exist even to the most distant ages: from eternity and unto eternity He is.

3. In contrast with the eternity of God is the transitoriness of man. The shortness of man's life is due to the divine decree in Gen. iii. 19: *In sudore vultus tui vesceris pane, donec revertaris in terram de qua sumptus es: quia pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris.* The Hebrew of verse 3 runs: 'Thou makest man dust again, and sayest: Return (to dust), ye children of men.'

Ne avertas: the *ne* is due to the mistake of reading *'el* twice—first as *'el*=God, and then as *'al*=prohibitive particle. *Humilitas* represents the Hebrew *dakka'*—which properly means something crushed or trampled, and hence, 'dust.' The Greek translators took it in the sense of 'lowliness.' *Convertimini* is the command, 'Return ye to the dust.' It can, however, be taken also as a command to return to God from sin—the implication being that sin is the source of death and the chief reason for the divine sentence in Gen. iii. 19.

4. It is fairly clear that this verse emphasises still further the fleeting character of human existence. In verse 3 the poet said: 'How fleeting is man's life compared with Thy eternity!' Now he goes on to say: 'Even a thousand years—in human affairs an immensely long period—is but a moment before Thee.' Yesterday

is gone. It cannot return: *quia praeteriit* would be better than *quae praeteriit*. *Custodia* is one of the three watches into which the night was anciently divided: it was a brief time which passed unnoticed by sleepers, and yet a thousand years before God is shorter than the duration of a night-watch to us.

5. The Vulgate text is easily understood: 'Something which one heeds not are their years'—*i.e.*, their years are as nothing. But the Hebrew is different: '*Thou sweepest them away, and they fall asleep* (in death)'—*z^eramtam shenah yihyu*. The Massoretic *shenah*, 'sleep,' was read apparently by the Greek translators as *shanoth*, 'years,' and *z^eramtam*, 'Thou sweepest them away (as if by a storm-flood)' was read as something equivalent to τὰ ἐξουδενώματα: it is not clear, however, how this sense was derived from the Hebrew. ἐξουδενώματα is found only once again in the Old Testament, in Dan. iv. 14, where it translates *shaphel*, 'lowly,' 'despicable.' It is possible that the translators read instead of *z^eramtam*, *zirmatham*, taking *zirmah* as 'that which flows away,' and is, therefore, regarded as worthless. It is possible also that the Massoretic text is here corrupt, even in its consonants; and it has been proposed that we should read *z^era'tam shanah shanah*, 'Thou sowest them year by year.' Adopting this reading and omitting *babboḳer* as a dittograph in the following line, and emending that line further to read *keḥaṣir weheḥ^eliph*, we should get as the sense of 5 and 6:

Thou sowest them year by year;
  They are like the grass of the aftermath.
In the morning it shoots forth and grows;
  In the evening it fades and dries up.

6. *Mane sicut herba transeat* renders the Hebrew *babboḳer keḥaṣir yaḥ^aloph*. Since it is probable, as already said, that *babboḳer* should be omitted as a dittograph we may omit the first *mane*. Reading then the Vulgate according to the emendations suggested in the Hebrew text we get:

Erunt (the years of a man's life) *sicut herba quae crescit* (=transit)
  Mane floret et crescit;
  Vespere decidit, indurat et arescit.

Indurat et arescit is a double rendering of the Hebrew *yabhesh*. The rendering of the Hebrew *ḥalaph* by *transire* in the Vulgate is not correct; the word must mean here something like 'shoot forth' (a meaning which is elsewhere found in the imperfect hiphil of *ḥalaph*, and in the perfect *ḳal* of the same verb—as here).

7–9. The fleeting character of all human affairs is illustrated in the history of Israel. Israel has failed (*defecimus*), and as in the case of humanity generally, her failure has been brought about by her sins which have aroused God's anger.

8. Israel's sin has been so great as to attract the attention of God in a very special manner: that sin stands before God's eyes lighted up with the full light of His face.

Saeculum nostrum is strange, one expects here a parallel to *iniquitates*. The Hebrew *'ᵃlumenu*, 'our hidden (sins)' was read by the Greeks as *'olamenu, saeculum nostrum*. Jerome has *negligentias nostras* (*cf.* Ps. xviii. 13; xliii. 22). Looking at the Vulgate alone we might take *saeculum nostrum* as='our worldly spirit,' 'our sinfulness.' The Targum reading *'lmn* as 'our youth' (*cf.* *'elem, 'almah*) renders, 'the sins of our youth.'

9. The meaning of this verse would be clearer if it were rendered according to the Hebrew:

> *Quoniam omnes dies nostri defecerunt in ira tua;*
> *Consumpsimus* (so Jerome rightly) *annos nostros sicut suspirium*

The 'spider' comes from reading the particle of comparison *kᵉmo* (*sicut*) as if it were *kᵉṭaw, i.e.*, the particle *kᵉ* (='like') and the participle, *ṭaw*, of the verb *ṭawah* ('to spin'). The 'spinner' was identified with the spider. *Meditabuntur* is based on the reading *haghu* (plural 3rd. person perf. *Ḳal* of *haghah*, which is often rendered *meditari*), instead of the Massoretic *hegheh*, 'a sigh.' Jerome, reading here *hogheh*, the participle of *haghah*, rendered *quasi sermonen loquens* (*cf.* the familiar rendering: 'We bring our years to an end, as it were a tale that is told').

The Hebrew text emphasises the sadness of life. Jerome combining different renderings explains: *Quomodo enim loquentis sermo praetervolat, ita et opus araneae incassum texitur.* Jerome seems to have attached to *meditari* here the sense of fruitless effort. Bellarmine, explaining the Vulgate says: *Tempus vitae nostrae exercebitur vanis laboribus et doloribus, timoribus, suspicionibus in temporalibus bonis procurandis et temporalibus malis cavendis, sicut aranea exercetur in texendis retibus omni re fragilioribus, non sine propriae substantiae consumptione.*

10. Human life is a span of 70–80 years. It is but a short time, and, therefore, the Lord should make haste to rescue Israel before the existing generation passes away. The 'days of our years' are the days of our life. *In ipsis* resumes, in Hebrew fashion, the *dies*: 'As for the days of our life—therein are (comprised therein are) 70 years'; the average length of human life is three score and ten years. *Si autem in potentatibus*—'but if there is question of a very high measure, of something greatly beyond the average,' life may extend to 80 years. *Potentatus* does not mean 'exceptional vital strength,' it means 'at most,' 'at the highest figure.' *Amplius eorum*—more than 80 years; beyond 80, life is but toil and trouble. The Septuagint translators read here *rubbam, amplius eorum*; the Massoretic text has *rahbam*, which is usually rendered 'their pride'—

so that the Massoretic text would mean apparently: Their pride (all that they can boast of) is nothing but toil and trouble: there is nothing to boast of even in the longest life.

Quoniam supervenit, etc.; this differs greatly from the Hebrew. The latter has: 'For it (their pride) swiftly speedeth hence, and we take flight.' The verb *gaz,* 'speed away,' 'disappear,' was rendered ἐπῆλθε (through Arabic influences); *ḥish,* 'haste,' 'hastily,' was taken as if it were from *ḥashah,* 'to be silent' (hence, *mansuetudo*); *corripiemur* (παιδευθησόμεθα) seems to be based on a different consonantal text from that which the Massoretes have followed. The Vulgate is not very intelligible here, nor does it become much more intelligible through Jerome's explanation: *Post septuaginta annos et octoginta, cum venerit Domini mansuetudo et dies nobis mortis ingruerit, non judicabimur juxta meritum, sed juxta clementiam: et quae putatur correptio esse, eruditio est et doctrina.* Jerome means, apparently, that the coming of death is for the pious the coming of the Lord in His gentleness, and the judgment after death is merely an enlightenment given by the Lord.

11, 12. The swiftly approaching death of Israel is a token of God's deep anger against His people. No one can tell how long that anger will last.

Et prae timore tuo iram tuam: instead of *prae* we should have *secundum*; then the sense would be:

> Who can know the might of Thy anger,
> And (who knoweth) Thy wrath as due fear of Thee demands?

Secundum timorem tuum=according to the fear of Thee, *i.e.,* as fear of Thee (due reverence for Thee) requires.

12. The Hebrew has:

> To reckon up our days—that teach Thou us,
> That so in our heart we may set wisdom.

The psalmist prays for instruction on the shortness of life, and believes that a wise heart (*i.e.,* prudence, and the fear of God) will be the fruit of that instruction.

Dexteram tuam represents the Hebrew *y^{e}min^{e}kha,* while the Massoretes have *yamenu,* 'our days': the *k* (=*kha*) is due to dittography, the *k* of the following word, *ken,* being mistakenly read twice. For the explanation of *eruditos corde* see Introd. p. xlii.

13. *Convertere*—'turn to us (graciously).' *Usquequo,* 'How long (wilt Thou be angry)?' God is besought to turn from the heat of His wrath, and be again gracious towards His people. For *usquequo* compare Ps. vi. 4; xii. 1.

14. The psalmist is confident that his prayer will be heard. Israel is plunged in the night of her sorrow: the psalmist prays that the

dawn may come quickly. Instead of *repleti sumus* we should have, *reple nos*. *Exsultavimus et delectati sumus*='that we may rejoice.'

15. *Laetati sumus*; better, *Laetifica nos*—'give us gladness as a set-off against the days of sorrow through which Israel has passed.'

16. *Opera*: the special care of Yahweh for His people. The Hebrew has: 'Let Thy work be visible to Thy servants.' The re-establishment of Israel will show to the world that Yahweh is present among His own, and that He guards them with loving care.

Et dirige filios eorum: the Hebrew has, *wah^a^dhar^e^kha 'al b^e^nehem*, 'And Thy glory to their sons'; this is parallel to, 'Let Thy work be visible to Thy servants.' The Greek translators read *w^e^hadhrekh*, 'And do Thou direct,' instead of *wah^a^dhar^e^kha*.

17. *Splendor*. Hebrew, *no'am*, 'favour.'

Opus manuum nostrarum='our undertakings' generally.

PSALM XC

IN THE PROTECTION OF MOST HIGH

THIS is an antiphonally arranged hymn of confidence in God's protection. The main theme of the poem is God's interest in the individual just man. On that interest is based the confidence of the pious in the unfailing protection of the Lord.

In verses 1–2 the first singer, or the first group of singers, introduces the theme of the psalm—the security of the pious as based on God's love. The pious man is guest of the Lord, a *domesticus Dei*, and he has, as such, a right to the inviolability of the guest. Yahweh is the hill-top, or highland, retreat, or shelter, to which the pious may fly for safety when pursued.

In verses 3–8 a second singer, or group of singers, sings of the perils to which the pious may be exposed—symbolising them by the net and the pit of the hunter. Yahweh keeps His servants safe from these perils: He is like the bird that hides its young from danger beneath its wings, or like the shield that protects the soldier in battle. Though the pious are surrounded by evil influences in the night and during the day; though they may be encompassed in the night-time by the demonic powers of pestilence, and be exposed in the day-time to the perils of burning, poisonous, winds, and the fiery arrows of the noon-tide sun, yet will no evil come nigh to them, nor any ill approach their homes. Secure themselves, they shall be favoured with the delight of looking on the defeat of all their foes.

In the first half of verse 9 the first singer, or singer-group proclaims: 'All that is true, for the Lord is my hope.' This declaration is taken up by the second choir, and some of the special kinds of help which Yahweh gives to His own are described. The Angels will bear the pious in their hands over the rough places of life, and the true servant of the Lord will tread unharmed on the lion and the adder.

The psalm concludes with an oracle of the Lord (vv. 14–16). Yahweh solemnly confirms what the singers have said. He promises to the pious rescue and help, because they 'know the name' of Yahweh. But the Lord promises His pious servants not merely rescue and protection, but also honour among their fellows, and great length of life.

The psalm contains striking reminiscences of the Song of Moses (Deut. xxxii)—a peculiarity which it shares with the preceding psalm. Hence it has been conjectured that the two psalms were composed by the same author. Psalm xc might be regarded as the answer of

faith to the prayer in Ps. lxxxix. The Massoretic text does not ascribe the psalm to any author.

1. Laus Cantici David.

Qui habitat in adjutorio Altissimi, in protectione Dei cœli commorabitur.

2. Dicet Domino: Susceptor meus es tu, et refugium meum: Deus meus sperabo in eum.

3. Quoniam ipse liberavit me de laqueo venantium, et a verbo aspero.
4. Scapulis suis obumbrabit tibi: et sub pennis ejus sperabis.
5. Scuto circumdabit te veritas ejus: non timebis a timore nocturno.
6. A sagitta volante in die, a negotio perambulante in tenebris: ab incursu, et dæmonio meridiano.

7. Cadent a latere tuo mille, et decem millia a dextris tuis: ad te autem non appropinquabit.
8. Verumtamen oculis tuis considerabis: et retributionem peccatorum videbis.

9. Quoniam tu es Domine spes mea: Altissimum posuisti refugium tuum.
10. Non accedet ad te malum et flagellum non appropinquabit tabernaculo tuo.
11. Quoniam Angelis suis mandavit de te: ut custodiant te in omnibus viis tuis.
12. In manibus portabunt te: ne forte offendas ad lapidem pedem tuum.
13. Super aspidem, et basiliscum ambulabis: et conculcabis leonem et draconem.

14. Quoniam in me speravit, liberabo eum: protegam eum, quoniam cognovit nomen meum.
15. Clamabit ad me, et ego exaudiam eum: cum ipso sum in tribulatione: eripiam eum et glorificabo eum.

1. A Psalm of David.

He that dwelleth in the shelter of Most High,
He that abideth in the shadow of Shaddai,
2. Saith to the Lord: My Protector art Thou,
My refuge, my God in Whom I trust.

3. For He rescueth thee from the hunter's snare,
And from the word that destroyeth:
4. With His pinions He shieldeth thee;
Under His wings thou art secure;
5. His Truth guardeth thee like a shield.
Thou shalt not fear the terrors of night,

6. Nor the arrow that flieth by day
Nor the plague that creepeth abroad in the darkness,
Nor the demon's attack at the noontide.
7. If thousands fall at thy right hand,
Yet will (the evil) not reach unto thee;

8. But with thine eyes thou shalt see,
Shalt behold the doom meted out to sinners.

9. For Thou, O Lord, art my Refuge.
Thou hast chosen Most High as thy Refuge
10. No evil shall come into thee;
No plague shall draw nigh to thy tent;

11. For to His angels He hath given thee in trust
To keep thee in all thy ways:
12. In their hands they shall bear thee up,
Lest thou dash thy foot 'gainst a stone.

13. On snakes and adders thou shalt tread
The lion and the dragon thou shalt trample on.

14. Because he trusted in Me I will help him;
I will guard him, for he knoweth My Name:
15. He calleth to Me and I hear him;
In time of need I am with him;
I rescue him and make him great;

16. Longitudine dierum replebo eum: et ostendam illi salutare meum.

16. With fulness of days I will sate him; I will make him to see My salvation.

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1. *Laus cantici David*: the title describes the psalm as song of praise to be sung; yet the psalm is obviously not a song of praise, or hymn. *Laus cantici* may be taken, perhaps, as equivalent to *psalmus cantici* (as in Ps. xxix. 1, *etc.*). The Hebrew gives no title to the psalm, and though many thoughts of the poem might very suitably be applied to the circumstances of David, we are not bound to assume that David was its author.

Qui habitat; this translates a Hebrew participle, 'he that dwelleth'; it gives the subject of *dicet* in verse 2. The Hebrew has in verse 2 'I shall say,' *'omar*, but in the translation the Vulgate, 'He shall say,' has been followed (the Greek translators having read *'omer*), and the two verses are taken as the statement of a general principle by a first group of singers. *Altissimi* renders the Hebrew *'Elyon* 'Most High,' which is not an adjective, but one of the ancient names of God (*cf.* Gen. xiv. 22; Num. xxiv. 16; Deut. xxxii. 8; Is. xiv. 14). *Dei* represents another ancient name of God—*Shaddai* (*cf.* Gen. xlix. 25). There is a peculiar solemnity in the use of these ancient and venerable divine names (*cf.* v. 14 below). Instead of help and protection the Hebrew has 'covert' and 'shade.' In the ancient days when there were as yet no Israelite fenced cities or fortresses, the peasants on the approach of bands of robber nomads hid themselves and their belongings in mountain-caves, or on more or less inaccessible hill-tops. What the rock-cave or the hill-top were to the terrified country-folk God is to those that trust in Him.

Commorabitur; the corresponding Hebrew word means 'to spend the night,' rather than to abide (though the sense of abiding belongs sometimes to the term); protection in the night was more valuable than shelter during the day. *Shaddai* is thought of as the Host who entertains His guests and gives them lodging for the night. *Cf.* Gen. xix. 8.

2. In the first verse God is called by the ancient mysterious names *'Elyon* and *Shaddai*: here He receives the more familiar (and more trusting) designations, *Yahweh*, and '*my 'Elohim*.'

3. Here the second choir begins. The *quoniam* takes up what the first choir or singer has said: 'Thy trust is indeed well placed, *for*,' *etc.* The snare is a symbol of treachery (*cf.* Ps. xxxvii. 13; lvi. 7; cxxiii. 7). The *verbum asperum* is parallel to the 'snare,' and seems to mean the word of calumny. The Hebrew has *middebher hawwoth*, which means 'from destructive pestilence'; the Greek reads more correctly *midd*^{e}*bhar* 'from the word of.' In verse 6 below *negotium* is based on a similar reading of *mdbr*, where *middebher* of the Massoretes

is more correct. Jerome has followed the Massoretic text here in his rendering: *a morte insidiarum.*[1]

4. Compare Deut. xxxii. 11:

> Like an eagle that rouseth its nest,
> And poiseth o'er its young ones,
> He spread out His wings, and took it (*i.e.*, His people, Israel)
> And bore it on His pinions.

Yahweh, according to the Song of Moses carried Israel, like an eagle, on His wings. Here He appears as protecting His people with outstretched wings. *Cf.* Ps. xxxv. 8; Exod. xix. 4 ('How I bare you on eagles' wings'); Matt. xxiii. 37. *Scapulae* ought to mean 'back'; but here it means, obviously, 'wings.'

5. God will surround him with the protecting shield of His favour. The Hebrew has: 'A shield and a buckler is His truth.' The Greeks read *yisḥar^e^kha,* 'He will encompass thee,' instead of the Massoretic *w^e^soḥerah,* 'and a buckler' (*saḥar* is used rather in Aramaic than in Hebrew in the sense of 'surround,' 'encompass'). The Hebrew word rendered by *scutum* means a large shield such as would protect the entire body. It is very striking that Yahweh should be represented as interposing His own person, as it were, between His worshipper and peril. There is nothing of the supposed Old Testament sternness of God here.

The *timor nocturnus* includes all the natural terrors and perils of the night.

6. The arrow that flies by day is probably the rays of the sun which might prove to be deadly at mid-day. For other 'arrows' of God *cf.* Ps. xxxvii. 3; Lam. iii. 12, 13; Job vi. 4; xvi. 13.

A negotio, etc.; here, as already said, the Hebrew word *debher,* 'plague,' 'pestilence,' was read by the Greeks as *dabhar,* 'word,' or 'thing.' The thought underlying the phrase is primarily, perhaps, that pestilence is helped in its spread by the vapours of the night. It is to be noted, also, that for the ancient Hebrews there was something mysterious and demonic in infectious diseases, and the night is, obviously, the most suitable time for the working of malignant demonic influences (*cf.* Is. xxxvii. 36: it was in the night time, too, that the destroying Angel of pestilence overthrew the Assyrian army. The Destroying Angel of the Exodus is represented, further, as

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[1] Possibly the Hebrew should be read as *mibbor hawwoth,* 'from the pit of destruction': this would make a neat parallel to 'the fowler's snare'—the 'pit' being a pit such as was used by hunters to trap big game. The 'pit' was covered over with branches, etc., and the game walking over the covering of the pit fell into it and could not climb out. Sheol is often spoken of as a 'pit'—on the analogy of such trenches or pits used for trapping game, and if the suggested reading *mibbor* could be accepted, we might possibly find a reference here also to Sheol.

accomplishing his mission of death during the night-time). *Perambulans* suggests the restless energy with which the pestilence spreads itself around.

Ab incursu et daemonio meridiano : this can be taken in the Vulgate as a hendiadys—'from the demonic attack at mid-day.' Incursus renders the Greek σύμπτωμα, which could well be used of a sudden attack of plague. Just as the darkness was favourable to the spread of disease, so might the mid-day sun be regarded as a friend of plague. But whence comes the idea of demonic attack ? If the Greek translators shared the ordinary Jewish notions on the nature and spread of pestilential diseases, they might have supposed that the demons of plague were wont to be peculiarly active at mid-day, and therefore, have used the phrase 'demonic attack at mid-day' for the sudden appearance of a plague-stroke during the great heat of the oriental noontide. It is also, possible, that the demonic attack was understood by the Greeks of spiritual perils. Theodoret has a quaint comment on this verse pointing out that after meal-time when they are sated (and, therefore, presumably, at mid-day) men are an easy prey for the demons, since 'they are then devoid of protection from above.'

The Hebrew text, however, seems to have nothing about demons nor spiritual dangers. It runs : 'From the destruction which rageth at mid-day.' *Ḳeṭebh*, which is usually rendered 'destruction' may possibly mean the destructive, plague-promoting, glow of the mid-day sun. But since the destruction is said to 'rage,' it is probably something more than the mere fiery heat of the sun—something like a wind or storm. Hence it has been conjectured that the reference in the 'raging destruction' may be to the dreaded poison-carrying simoon from the southern deserts. Baethgen points out that in Jewish legend the deadly simoon was transformed into a demon which dwelt in Arabia, and he seems to imply that the Jewish personification of the simoon suggested to the Greek translators the 'mid-day demon.' The simplest explanation of the *daemonium meridianum* is to be found, however, in a misreading of the text which the Greek translators had before them. The Massoretic text reads : *miḳḳeṭebh yashudh* (better, *yashodh*) *ṣoḥ°rayim.* The Greek translators read the text as *miḳḳeṭebh w^e^shedh ṣoḥ°rayim. Shedh* means 'demon,' and instead of 'rageth' (*yashodh*), the Greek translators read *w^e^shedh*, 'and the demon.' We have here another of the many instances in which the Massoretic and Vulgate texts, in spite of apparently serious disagreements, can be reduced to one primitive consonantal text.

Jerome renders here : *A morsu insidiantis meridiei* (which recalls his *a morte insidiarum* of verse 3 above). The Syriac version has, 'From the wind which rages at mid-day,' referring obviously to the simoon—which would be most deadly at mid-day.

7. Even though thousands fall through the attacks of disease, and through other disasters, at the right hand of him who trusts in Yahweh, yet will the loyal and trusting worshipper of the Lord stand secure. No evil can come nigh to him who has sought his protection in the Lord. The subject of *appropinquabit* is to be supplied from the context. It is 'evil' or 'death,' or something similar. This verse is an extraordinary proclamation of faith. Even though a whole world should fall in death all round the believer, he will go his way untouched, unharmed.

8. His enemies, the enemies of God, he will see discomfited, and duly requited for their misdeeds. Rejoicing at the failure of the godless is a chief pleasure of the just.

9. The second half of this verse seems to be a sort of answer to the first. 9*b* marks, apparently, the beginning of a new section sung by the singer or choir whose words we have seen in verses 3–8.

The second choir here says to the first: 'Thou hast made the Most High thy refuge.' *Cf.* verse 2.

10. Because the singer has made Most High his refuge no evil can approach him. The 'scourge' may be disease (Jerome renders *lepra*) or other affliction. 'Tent' is not merely his dwelling, but everyone and everything that exists therein. The faith of the individual becomes thus a protection to his family and his associates.

11. *Mandavit de te*: He has given the Angels a commission concerning thee. *Cf.* Gen. xxiv. 7; Deut. xxxiii. 27; Is. lxiii. 9; Matt. iv. 6. This text is rightly used to prove the existence of Guardian Angels. The Angels are commissioned to carry the trusting worshipper gently and lovingly, bearing him carefully over rough places lest his foot strike against a stone. We must think here of the wretched roads which traversed the rugged, stony land of Palestine, and we must think also of the slight protection which was given to the feet of the Hebrew wanderer by the poor, thin sandals which he was wont to wear.

12. Compare Prov. iii. 23.

13. Instead of 'asp' the Hebrew has *shaḥal*, lion. The lion and the adder are symbols of powerful and treacherous foes. The Greek translators read *laḥash*, 'asp,' instead of *shaḥal*. The *leonem* of the second part of the verse shows that the Massoretic *shaḥal* of the first part is correct. The adder (Hebr. *pethen*) is called *basiliscus*, 'kingly'; the origin of this designation is said to be the presence on the creature's head of a spot resembling a crown.

14. Here we have a divine oracle, which confirms the words of the human singers. God promises to the pious man all that the latter has prayed for, or can pray for—rescue, protection, constant gracious hearing, help in every need that may arise, honour among his fellows, and length of days. God will give everything to those that trust in Him (*cf.* Ps. xlix. 15, 23). The pious man knows the

Lord : he knows His names (as we see in vv. 2 and 3), and hence he knows how rightly to invoke the Lord and to ask His help. To know God's name, however, is not merely to know the name by which God is invoked ; it is also to know much of the real character of God, to be the possessor of special, *revealed* knowledge concerning Him. Knowledge like this necessarily affects conduct, for rightly to know God is to love Him. That one who knows, and, therefore, loves the Lord, and keeps His commands must enjoy prosperity and honour is a commonplace of Hebrew teaching.

16. The surest sign of God's favour was a long life. The *salutare* is the saving help—the constant divine assistance, which the pious is made to experience.

PSALM XCI

THE JUSTICE OF THE LORD

THIS psalm is a hymn which glorifies the justice of God's Providence. It is assigned by the title to the Sabbath. The structure of the hymn is easily seen. Verses 2–4 express the delight of the psalmist in giving praise and thanks to the Lord. For him and for Israel it is a necessity to burst out into songs of praise unto the Lord. The halls of the Temple must ring with the praises of Yahweh not merely at the time of the morning offering, but even throughout the night. Instruments of all kinds, but especially the great ten-stringed harp, make joyous accompaniment to the hymns of Israel's praise.

Verses 5–7. The reason for the songs of praise is the justice of the Lord. The works and plans (' thoughts ') of Yahweh are all guided by justice. It is only a fool that cannot recognise the universal presence of Yahweh's just rule.

8–9. The first proof of Yahweh's justice can be seen in His treatment of the godless. They seem to prosper for a little time, but their prosperity is only apparent. In truth they are reserved for destruction, and in that destruction men will clearly see the hand of God.

10–13. The second proof of God's justice is His attitude towards the just. The poet is one of those, and he is confident that Yahweh will ' raise up his horn ' and permit him to feast his eyes on the downfall of the wicked, and gladden his ears with listening to the story of their defeat. When the godless are gone, the pious will flourish like the palm, or like the cedar of Lebanon.

14–16. The just will rejoice in the blessings of Yahweh, and will live in closest contact with His Sanctuary. Living in the Temple they will flourish like fruit-trees, transplanted to the courts of the Lord. Rich in blessing they will be like trees that blossom and bear fruit in old age, and will thus proclaim to the world that the Providence of Yahweh is just.

The date of this psalm cannot be determined.

1. Psalmus Cantici, In die sabbati.	1. A Psalm for the Sabbath.
2. Bonum est confiteri Domino: et psallere nomini tuo Altissime.	2. It is good to praise the Lord, And to hymn Thy name, Most High,
3. Ad annuntiandum mane misericordiam tuam: et veritatem tuam per noctem.	3. To proclaim in the morning Thy favour And Thy truth in the night

4. In decachordo, psalterio: cum cantico, in cithara.

4. With ten-stringed psaltery and harp,
With zither-accompanied song.

5. Quia delectasti me Domine in factura tua: et in operibus manuum tuarum exsultabo.

5. For Thou gladdenest me, Lord, by Thy deeds;
I rejoice o'er the works of Thy hands.

6. Quam magnificata sunt opera tua Domine! nimis profundæ factæ sunt cogitationes tuæ:

6. How great are Thy works, O Lord!
Too deep are Thy thoughts!

7. Vir insipiens non cognoscet: et stultus non intelliget hæc.

7. The foolish man knoweth this not:
The fool comprehendeth it not.

8. Cum exorti fuerint peccatores sicut fœnum: et apparuerint omnes, qui operantur iniquitatem:
Ut intereant in sæculum sæculi:

8. When the godless spring forth as the grass,
And evil-doers all bloom forth,
'Tis that they may but vanish for ever;

9. Tu autem Altissimus in æternum Domine.

9. But Thou, Most High, art forever.

10. Quoniam ecce inimici tui Domine, quoniam ecce inimici tui peribunt: et dispergentur omnes, qui operantur iniquitatem.

10. Yea, verily, Thy enemies, O Lord,
Yea, verily, Thy enemies perish:
All evil-doers are scattered.

11. Et exaltabitur sicut unicornis cornu meum: et senectus mea in misericordia uberi.

11. But my horn is raised like that of the bison:
My old age enjoyeth fulness of favour:

12. Et despexit oculus meus inimicos meos: et in insurgentibus in me malignantibus audiet auris mea.

12. My eye hath its pleasure in my enemies;
My ear heareth gladly (of the fall) of my fierce foes;

13. Justus, ut palma florebit: sicut cedrus Libani multiplicabitur.

13. The just man bloometh like the palm;
Like a cedar of Lebanon he flourisheth.

14. Plantati in domo Domini, in atriis domus Dei nostri florebunt.

14. Planted in the House of the Lord
In the Temple-courts of our God they bloom:

15. Adhuc multiplicabuntur in senecta uberi: et bene patientes erunt,

15. Even in old age they bear rich fruit,
Are still green and flourishing;

16. Ut annuntient:
Quoniam rectus Dominus Deus noster: et non est iniquitas in eo.

16. Thus proclaiming that the Lord, our God, is just,
That in Him is no wrong.

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1. *In die Sabbati*: this psalm was used as a Sabbath-song in the Temple-worship. It deals in the form of a song of praise with the same theme which we find in Ps. xxxvi, xlviii, lxxii.

3. 'Grace (favour) in the morning and Truth in the night'—the grouping is merely rhythmical. The song of praise should never cease in the Temple.

4. *Cantico*: the corresponding Hebrew, *higgayon*, means rather a type of vehement music or song than a musical instrument: the sense is, 'With zither-accompanied *higgayon*.' For the harp of ten strings compare Ps. xxxii. 2; cxliii. 9.

5. *Factura*: the Hebrew, *po'el* means 'performance,' 'work.' The performance in question is Yahweh's watchful care over Israel: it is not His creative work, but the whole work of His Providence, particularly in regard to Israel. The methods of that Providence the fool cannot understand.

6. The 'thoughts' of the Lord include the policy which permits to the godless the enjoyment of a transitory success and happiness so as to make their failure at the end all the more complete.

7. *Insipiens*: Hebrew, 'the brutish man.' *Cf.* Ps. lxxii. 22; *Ego ad nihilum redactus sum et nescivi; ut jumentum factus sum apud te.* *Cf.* Ps. xlviii. 11, and the *animalis homo* of 1 Cor. ii. 14, and the *insipiens* of Rom. i. 21. The *haec*=the method of God's dealings with the godless. The brutish man has no principle of explanation for the facts of history or life. *Cf.* Wisd. xiii. 1*ff*.

8. The profundity of God's thought is seen especially in this, that the very prosperity of the wicked is made the chief instrument of their punishment. They are allowed to become prosperous and secure, in order that the sudden and unexpected loss of their advantages may be peculiarly painful. They are like the grass that quickly shoots forth and as quickly withers. *Cf.* Ps. xxxvi. 2, etc.

Apparuerint: the Hebrew, *yaṣiṣu*=shoot forth—parallel to *exorti fuerint*. Jerome has:

> *Germinaverunt impii quasi foenum*
> *et floruerunt omnes qui operantur iniquitatem.*

The Vulgate (following Septuagint) rendering *apparuerint* may be due to a confusion between *ṣuṣ*, 'to shoot forth,' and a very rare verb of similar form, *ṣuṣ*, 'to peep forth.' *Cf.* Canticle of Cant. ii. 9.

Ut intereant: their prosperity was permitted to this very end—their complete and final overthrow. *Cf.* Prov. vi. 4.

9. It is because Yahweh rules eternally in heaven that the overthrow of the impious is certain.

Altissimus; the Hebrew would be better rendered by, *Tu autem in altissimis.*

10. *Cf.* Judges v. 31.

11. *Et exaltabitur*: this is based on a Hebrew reading *wattarom*. The Massoretic text has *wattarem*='and Thou exaltest.'

Sicut unicornis: like the horn of the bison. For the 'unicorn see Ps. xxi. 22. 'Raising the horn' means giving strength and boldness.

Et senectus mea in misericordia uberi: the Hebrew has: 'And my "powerlessness" (Thou exaltest) with fresh oil.' *Debilitas*, would be better than *senectus*. *Senectus* (or, *debilitas*) is to be taken with *exaltabitur*. *Misericordia* may be due to a confusion between ἔλαιον, 'oil,' and ἐλεόν, 'pity,' 'mercy' (see Codex B) as in Ps. lxxxiii. 12.

Despexit: regard with pleasure their failure. The *inimicos meos* of the Vulgate represents a much better Hebrew than the Massoretic *shurai*.

Audiet; as the eyes of the psalmist will be gladdened by the sight of his adversaries' defeat, so will his ears be gladdened when he listens to the story of their failure. St. Augustine thinks that the reference is to the joy which the blessed will have when they hear the words addressed to the wicked: *Ite in ignem aeternum*. Joy at the utter discomfiture of enemies is frequently a chief consolation of the psalmists.

13. Verses 13–16 recall Ps. li. 10–11. Like the cedar the just man attains a great age, and, like the palm, he maintains an appearance of dignity and splendour. Agellius thus develops the symbolism: *Utraque arbor quidem diuturna est, utraque semper floret, sed palma fructifera est, cedrus infructifera; rursus haec ramis abundans, illa non item. Ergo florentis probi pulchritudinem et suavitatem palmae comparavit, generis et stirpis propagationem cedro Libani.*

14. *Cf.* Ps. li. 10. 'Planted' does not refer to the palm or the cedars, but to the just whom the trees symbolise. The just of Israel have free ingress to the Temple, and there, as it were, they strike root and flourish. Even though it is possible that trees of some kind grew in the precincts of the Temple, certainly no cedars grew there, so that we are justified in referring verse 14 directly to the just. The fulness of the lives of the loyal worshippers, their wealth of good works, and the prosperity which marked their career are suggested by the comparison with fruit-trees (like the palm) that have been transplanted to the courts of the Temple. *Cf.* Ps. i. 3.

15. The Hebrew here runs:

> 'Even in old age they bear fruit:
> Verdant and full of sap are they.'

In the first half of the verse the just are likened, it would seem, to the palm, and in the second half to the olive.

Multiplicabuntur represents the Hebrew *y^e^nubhun*, 'they bring forth fruit.'

In senecta uberi: the Greek translators divided their Hebrew text differently from the Massoretes, taking *sebhah*, 'old-age,' with the following word which they, apparently read *d^e^shenah* (instead of the Massoretic *d^e^shenim*) making it feminine singular, to agree with *sebhah*. In the Hebrew *d^e^shenim* (='green') and *ra^a^'nannim* (='juicy') are adjectives descriptive of the just as symbolised by

palms and olives. Jerome renders: *Pingues et frondentes erunt. Bene patientes* is an attempt to construe a rendering, εὐπαθοῦντες (=feeling themselves sound and well), which the Greeks took to be the meaning of *ra'ᵃnannim.*

16. *Ut annuntient*: the success of His worshippers will itself proclaim to the world the truthfulness and uprightness of Yahweh. *Cf.* Deut. xxxii. 4.

Deus noster: the Hebrew has 'My Rock.' *Cf.* Introd. p. xxxix.

PSALM XCII

YAHWEH, KING OF THE WORLD

THIS psalm is a hymn to Yahweh as King of the universe. The cry with which it begins: 'The Lord is King,' is a cry of joy at the sight of Yahweh ascending, as it were, the throne from which He rules the world. For a time Israel had been cast down in defeat, and it had seemed as if Yahweh had abandoned His rule of the nations. But once again He has intervened and shown His might and His justice. Israel's enemies have been overthrown, and in the pride of victory, the psalmist sings as if now, for the first time, Yahweh were the King of the world, 'Yahweh is King.' What the intervention was that proved the love of the Lord for Israel we do not know. It was not the return from Exile, for verse 5 speaks of the Temple as still standing inviolate. The ascription of the psalm to David is wanting in the Massoretic text, and it is improbable that the occasion of the poem was an event of the Davidic period. The enthronement of Yahweh is coloured for the psalmist by the Messianic outlook: Yahweh, as King of the world, is depicted in the traditional imagery of the Messianic King. The King of the Messianic End-period was traditionally regarded as resuming and repeating in Himself the glories of the Lord of the Creation-period. So the Lord of the world is here shown restraining His foes as the Creator restrained His adversaries, the powers of Chaos and the Abyss, 'when He shut in the Sea with the sand'—

> When he burst forth, issuing from the womb.
> When I made cloud his apparel,
> And thick vapour his swathing band,
> And imposed on him a decree,
> And set a bar and doors:
> 'Thus far thou mayest come, but no farther;
> And here shall thy swell be broken.'—(Job xxxviii. 8-11.) [1]

The enemies of Yahweh may storm and rage, but above the sea-storm of their fury Yahweh sits unmoved on His eternal throne. No billows, however highly tossed, of their raging can attain to the everlasting throne which is set above the waters of earth and heaven (*cf.* Ps. xxviii. 10). It is not now for the first time that Yahweh is

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[1] See C. J. Ball, "The Book of Job," p. 87, and compare the references to the Epic of Marduk which Ball gives in his notes on these and the following verses of Job xxxviii. pp. 416*ff*.

King: His reign is from eternity and to eternity. The recent defeat of Israel's foes which has driven them back from Jerusalem and the Temple is a striking proof of the permanence of Yahweh's rule, even when His foes may seem for a moment to prevail. His promises of help to Israel, and of inviolability for His Sanctuary have been fulfilled in the deed of rescue which He has performed for His people, and the psalmist looks forward triumphantly to the permanent inviolability of Sion.

Laus Cantici ipsi David in die ante sabbatum, quando fundata est terra.

1. Dominus regnavit, decorem indutus est: indutus est Dominus fortitudinem, et præcinxit se.
Etenim firmavit orbem terræ, qui non commovebitur.
2. Parata sedes tua ex tunc: a sæculo tu es.

3. Elevaverunt flumina Domine: elevaverunt flumina vocem suam.
Elevaverunt flumina fluctus suos,
4. A vocibus aquarum multarum.
Mirabiles elationes maris: mirabilis in altis Dominus.

5. Testimonia tua credibilia facta sunt nimis: domum tuam decet sanctitudo Domine in longitudinem dierum.

A psalm of David for the day before the Sabbath, when the earth was established.

1. The Lord is King: He is robed in glory:
He hath clad and girded Himself with power:
He hath made firm the world;
It tottereth never.

2. Thy throne standeth firm since the days of old;
From eternity Thou abidest.

3. High raised the waters, O Lord,
High raised the waters their roaring,
High raised the waters their billows,

4. Yet beyond the thunder of the waters mighty, wondrous,
Beyond the surgings of the sea,
Is the Lord wonderful on high.

5. Trustworthy indeed are Thy testimonies;
Holiness beseemeth Thy House,
Even to the end of days.

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1. The inscription is wanting in the Hebrew text. The Talmud explains the ascription of the psalm to the day before the Sabbath, by saying that it was on the sixth day that the creation was completed, and that it was on that day, therefore, that the Lord began to reign over the world and its dwellers. The psalm is not, however, a mere Creation-hymn. It celebrates some great event in which Yahweh is regarded as taking up again, as it were, the rule of the world as its Creator, which, in a period of apparent indifference to the fate of Israel, He seemed to have abandoned. Thus the psalm may be taken almost with certainty as occasioned by a politically important victory won by Israel. But as in so many other psalms the greatness and might of the intervention by which Yahweh has re-established the power and the confidence of Israel, are represented as attributes of the Messianic King, and the manifestation of Yahweh's greatness

which has been given in the recent rescue of Israel is regarded as a sort of re-enthronement of the Lord of the Creation-period as King of the World. That re-enthronement is, at the same time, depicted as the coming to the throne of the King of the Messianic Age. Thus in the psalm are interwoven with the thought of Yahweh's wonderful intervention on behalf of His people features derived from the Messianic hope, and from the traditional poetic method of describing the glories of the primitive, and idyllic, Creation period, when Yahweh ruled as King of a young and still sinless world.

Dominus regnavit: Psalms xcvi and xcviii begin also with the cry, *Dominus regnavit*. The Messianic reference of the words can be seen in Is. xxiv. 23 and lii. 7. *Cf.* Apoc. xix. 6. The rescue of Israel which has just taken place proves that Yahweh is indeed King of the world.

Decorem indutus est: the psalmist's mind is here divided between the thought of nature as the glorious garment which the Lord puts on, and the thought of the King of the world as ascending His throne in all the splendour of His coronation-robes. The two thoughts can be fused in the notion of the Creator taking His place on the throne of the world at the moment of the completion of creation.

Firmavit: based on Hebrew *tikken* (*cf.* Ps. lxxiv. 4) which is better than the Massoretic *tikkon*. The psalmist thinks of the earth as having been brought to tottering through general (moral) disorder. But Yahweh, by His judgment has once again made the order of the world secure. *Cf.* Ps. xcv. 10; *Correxit orbem terrae qui non commovebitur*.

2. *Ex tunc*: this is parallel to *a saeculo*, and has the same meaning. Before the recent intervention of the Lord in the affairs of His people, it might, perhaps, have seemed as if He had ceased, for a time at least, from the task of ruling the world. In reality, however, His rule is everlasting: it has not ceased, nor will it ever cease or be disturbed.

3. The wildly raging sea is a symbol of the raging of Yahweh's foes—the heathen peoples that would, if they could, overthrow His throne (*cf.* Ps. xlv. 7). The *vox* is the thundering of the sea. The *flumina* are not merely rivers (as if the Euphrates and the Nile were meant), but the 'floods,' or turbulent rivers which symbolise in general the enemies of the Lord. Kimchi refers here to Ezech. i. 24, where the whirring of the Cherub's wings is compared to the sound of many waters, and to Is. viii. 7: 'Wherefore the Lord shall bring up upon them the waters mighty and many of the river, the king of Ashshur and all his glory.' There is no definite geographical allusion in the *flumina*.

4. The Latin would probably be better if it read:

A vocibus aquarum multarum mirabilium,
Ab elationibus maris,
Mirabilis in altis Dominus

The *a* represents the Hebrew particle of comparison *min*. *Mirabilis* is falsely separated from *aquarum*, of which it is a second adjective—following *multarum*. *Elationes* is in apposition to *aquarum*, and ought to be taken as governed also by the particle of comparison. The raging sea is wonderfully glorious and majestic with its thunderous crashing, and the breaking of its mighty waves ; but more majestic still is He who sits untroubled on His everlasting throne above the storms of earth. The wrath of man against Yahweh is as futile as the storming of the earthly oceans against Him who sits enthroned above the flood. Ps. xxviii. 10.

5. The 'testimonies' of the Lord are the various manifestations of His will—particularly the judgments which He has pronounced beforehand against His foes. The divine intervention which occasioned the psalm furnishes a proof of God's interest in the affairs of men.

The 'holiness' of the House (the Temple) is its inviolability: that no enemy has been permitted to despoil the Temple is a genuine token of the Lord's constant presence and protecting care.

PSALM XCIII

YAHWEH, AS AVENGING GOD

PSALMS xciii, xxxv, and lxxvi form a group by themselves. They deal with the problems connected with the divine rule of the world. Ps. lxxvi treats of the problems of Providence in relation to the history of the nation, Israel. Ps. xxxv and xciii deal with the difficulties which arise for the pious from the presence of sin and sinners in Israel. *Cf.* also Ps. lxxii.

In a solemn introduction the author of this psalm calls on God to arise in judgment against the tyranny of sinners. Why does God allow evil to persist so long? If He does not soon intervene the pious will be forced to despair (1–3). Then follows a brief description of the doings and sayings of the sinners. The psalmist complains in particular of their perversion of justice, and of their insolent indifference towards God (4–7). *Cf.* Ps. xiii. 4; x. 4, 11; lxxii. 11, etc.

In verses 8–11 the psalmist addresses a solemn reproof and warning to the godless, which reminds one of the style of prophetic preaching (*cf.* Jer. xiii. 13*f.*; Is. viii. 9*f.*). Will they not be convinced of their folly? Surely the Creator of eye and ear, the Judge of the world, the source of all human insight cannot remain ignorant of that which a man, who is a mere breath, thinks and does!

The poet goes on in verses 12–15 to reflect on his own good fortune in possessing the Law of God. For him that Law is not a burden, but a delight. God who gave the Law must continue to be the guardian of all justice on earth.

In verses 16–19 the psalmist sings of something which is higher and better than the Law. This is communion, fellowship with God. Through his sufferings the pious learns that the greatest of all good things is union with God. Since he knows that there is a just God who will avenge him, the pious man can wait quietly and confidently till the time of his salvation comes. The psalm becomes here an enthusiastic hymn of praise of the soul resting in God. *Cf.* Ps. lxxii.

In the final section (20–23) the poet proclaims his conviction that God is not a God of injustice, but of justice, and that sinners will, in the end, feel the fury of His wrath.

Though the psalm is connected with the name of David by the superscription, the general standpoint and tone of the poem would suggest a comparatively late date. The Hebrew text gives no superscription to the psalm.

Psalmus ipsi David, Quarta sabbati.

1. Deus ultionum Dominus: Deus ultionum libere egit.

2. Exaltare qui judicas terram: redde retributionem superbis.

3. Usquequo peccatores Domine, usquequo peccatores gloriabuntur:

4. Effabuntur, et loquentur iniquitatem: loquentur omnes, qui operantur injustitiam?

5. Populum tuum Domine humiliaverunt: et hæreditatem tuam vexaverunt.

6. Viduam, et advenam interfecerunt: et pupillos occiderunt.

7. Et dixerunt: Non videbit Dominus, nec intelliget Deus Jacob.

8. Intelligite insipientes in populo: et stulti aliquando sapite.

9. Qui plantavit aurem, non audiet? aut qui finxit oculum, non considerat?

10. Qui corripit Gentes, non arguet: qui docet hominem scientiam?

11. Dominus scit cogitationes hominum, quoniam vanæ sunt.

12. Beatus homo, quem tu erudieris Domine: et de lege tua docueris eum,

13. Ut mitiges ei a diebus malis: donec fodiatur peccatori fovea.

14. Quia non repellet Dominus plebem suam: et hæreditatem suam non derelinquet.

15. Quoadusque justitia convertatur in judicium: et qui juxta illam omnes qui recto sunt corde

16. Quis consurget mihi adversus malignantes? aut quis stabit mecum adversus operantes iniquitatem?

17. Nisi quia Dominus adjuvit me: paulo minus habitasset in inferno anima mea.

18. Si dicebam: Motus est pes meus: misericordia tua Domine adjuvabat me.

A Psalm of David; for Wednesday.

1. The God of vengeance, the Lord,
The God of vengeance hath acted boldly.

2. Arise thou who rulest the earth!
Give requital to the proud!

3. How long, O Lord, shall the wicked,
How long shall the wicked boast?

4. They babble, haughtily they speak:
They boast—all the evildoers.

5. They trample, O Lord, on Thy people,
They oppress Thy inheritance.

6. The widow and the sojourner they slay,
And murder the orphans.

7. They say: "The Lord seeth it not;
The God of Jacob heedeth it not."

8. Ye dullards of the people give heed!
Ye fools be ye sometime wise!

9. Who hath fixed the ear—shall He not hear?
Who hath fashioned the eye—shall He not see?

10. Who chideth the nations—shall He not punish—
Who teacheth men knowledge?

11. The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men—
How vain they are.

12. Lucky the man whom Thou teachest, O Lord!
Whom Thou teachest out of Thy Law,

13. To give him peace on the evil day
Until the pit is digged for the godless.

14. For the Lord will not reject His people,
Nor abandon His inheritance.

15. Until judgment is based upon justice,
And the upright of heart cleave thereto.

16. Who will arise for me against the godless?
Who will stand by me against evildoers?

17. Were not the Lord my Helper,
Long since had my soul dwelt in Sheol.

18. Whenever I thought: "My foot is unsteady,"
Thy kindness, O Lord, gave me help.

19. Secundum multitudinem dolorum meorum in corde meo : consolationes tuæ lætificaverunt animam meam.

19. If my heart was weighed down by my griefs,
Thy comfortings gladdened my soul

20. Numquid adhæret tibi sedes iniquitatis : qui fingis laborem in præcepto ?
21. Captabunt in animam justi : et sanguinem innocentem condemnabunt.
22. Et factus est mihi Dominus in refugium : et Deus meus in adjutorium spei meæ.
23. Et reddet illis iniquitatem ipsorum : et in malitia eorum disperdet eos : disperdet illos Dominus Deus noster.

20. Doth the chair of the godless cling to Thee ?
Who devisest trouble by (Thy) law ?
21. They seek after the life of the just,
And innocent blood they condemn.
22. But the Lord is a refuge for me
My God is the Help which I hope for.
23. To those He requiteth their guilt ;
In their sin He scattereth them ;
The Lord, our God, scattereth them.

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1. *Ipsi David* : the general situation implied in the poem is not in favour of Davidic authorship. The inscription may be taken to mean that the psalm is Davidic in tone (so Hoberg).

Quarta sabbati=the Septuagint assigns the psalm to Wednesday, so that it may be assumed that it was used as a hymn in the Temple-service in the Second Temple on Wednesdays. The Talmud suggests this also.

Libere egit : this represents the Hebrew *haphia'* which may be regarded as an imperative, 'Appear' (*cf.* Ps. xlix. 2). The Greek translators took the word as referring to the justice and impartiality of God's dealings with men, and rendered it by ἐπαῤῥησιάσατο : Jerome has *ostendere.*

2–4 : the description of the godless here recalls Ps. lxxii. 6–9.

Effabuntur, 'speak great things.' Agellius says : *Effari . . . non est simpliciter loqui, sed ex imo pectore tamquam redundantia ex jugi fonte verba proferre non sine tumore quodam ac sono vocis.* Jerome renders the first half of the verse : *Fluent loquentes antiquum.*

The Hebrew verb *yabbi'u* is used in the same way without object in Ps. lviii. 8.

Loquentur in the second half of the verse is a rendering of *yith'amm^e^ru,* which has probably a reciprocal sense—they urge each other on by their proud vaunting speech.

5. This verse does not imply that the godless in question are foreigners. The whole people of Israel have been made to suffer through their doings, but if they were men of influence, such as judges, that would be easily intelligible. In verses 6 and 15 the sinners are represented as unjust judges who observe only the technicalities of the law. *Cf.* with verse 6, Is. i. 10, 23 ; Habacuc i. 13.

Haereditas=Israel—the special possession of the Lord.

7. *Dixerunt* : think (*in corde,* understood). The words which follow summarise their thoughts.

8–9: The absurdity of the standpoint taken by the sinners. As in Ps. xiii. 1, they are called "fools." How can their doings remain hidden from Him who is the Fashioner of ears and eyes? As Theodoret puts it: Shall the Maker of these things be wanting in that power which He has given to others?

10. *Corripit* ought to mean 'train,' 'teach' (*cf.* Is. viii. 11; Prov. xxxi. 1 for a similar use of the Hebrew *yasar*). If Yahweh is the Teacher of the nations He surely has the right to chide them when they disregard His teaching. The *scientia* is here primarily knowledge of God and of His will. It is to be noted that the psalmist makes Yahweh the Teacher, not merely of Israel, but of all the peoples. *Cf.* with this the Pauline teaching, Rom. i. 21; ii. 14*f.*

11. Here we have no longer a question, but the positive statement that God knows the thoughts and plannings of men. Hence He knows also the cruel and callous designs of the sinners of verse 7. The sense of the Hebrew would be better conveyed if we had *quoniam vani sunt*: men are a mere breath (*hebhel*); and how can a mere breath withdraw itself from the power of an omnipotent Creator? In the Latin the vanity and emptiness of men's thoughts, rather than the insignificance of men themselves, is emphasised. This does not change the thought conveyed by the Hebrew very greatly.

12. In contrast with the foolish sinners who fondly imagine that God does not concern Himself with the doings of men the psalmist sets those who have gained a true insight into God's plans by a careful study of His Law. These men will be untroubled and happy in spite of the evils of the time. This verse is based on Job v. 17 (where, however, the instruction in question is that which is gained by suffering, rather than by the study of the Law).

13. *Ut mitiges ei*: Jerome has more correctly, *ut quiescat a diebus afflictionis.* The days of trouble are the evil days which will fall to the lot of the godless. From these the pious will be preserved (*cf.* Ps. xlviii. 11 for a contrast with this). The pit is the destruction which is prepared for the sinner. Obviously retribution is to begin in this life. *Mitigare* must here mean 'save,' 'rescue.' It is used in Ps. lxxxiv. 4; lxxxviii. 10 in the sense of 'restrain.' Here it renders *hishḳiṭ*, 'to procure rest from.' The sense is not that suggested by Bellarmine: *ut mitiges ei tristitiam quae oritur a diebus malis.*

14. What is true of the individual just man is true of the whole people of God (*cf.* Deut. xxxii. 9). Even though the people are in trouble, it is unthinkable that they shall not in time be rescued therefrom.

15. *Judicium* is 'justice' in the concrete—whether in the form of fairness in conduct, generally, or honesty in giving decisions, in particular. The psalmist means that justice will become the norm of conduct when the godless judges who are now perverting justice

shall have been set aside. Theodoret, taking Justice as a name for Christ finds here a prophecy of the coming of Christ and of the rejection of the Jews.

Et qui juxta illam: the Greek gives the meaning; 'All who are of upright heart are such as will be in accordance with justice'; that is, the upright of heart will always seek to maintain the true standard of justice. The Latin is to be understood thus: *omnes qui recto corde sunt* (*tales sunt*) *qui juxta illam* (*sunt*).

16. A question which the psalmist (here perhaps representing Israel) puts to himself in time of need. He has no doubt as to the answer (vv. 17–18). Compare Ps. lxxii. 25. *Mecum*, by my side in battle (*cf.* Ps. liv. 19).

17. We must add *fuisset*: *nisi fuisset quia*.

Paulo minus=almost (*cf.* Ps. cxviii. 87).

In inferno: *infernus* is sheol, the underworld. The Hebrew has 'in silence' (*dumah*). The silence is that of the land of death.

18. *Si dicebam*, 'whenever I said' (*i.e.*, thought).

19. This verse seems to say that there is a proportion between the tribulations which the just man suffers and the comfort he receives from God. Theodoret quotes here 2 Cor. i. 5: *Quoniam sicut abundant passiones Christi in nobis; ita et per Christum abundat consolatio nostra*. *Cf.* 2 Cor. viii. 9.

20. The question voices one of the cares which beset him; it is addressed to God. Surely God cannot take sides with the *sedes iniquitatis*, with the unjust judges, against those who keep His Law! This question is answered in what precedes; it is answered also in verses 22–23.

Qui fingis: this in the Latin refers to God (*tibi*); hence it must be taken to mean, 'Who decreest trouble by (Thy) Law'—*i.e.*, who makest laws that are difficult to observe. The Hebrew participle *yoṣer* can be read with *kisse' hawwoth*, *sedes iniquitatis* (*cf.* Ps. i. 1) and the sense then becomes, 'Which maketh mischief according to the Law'—*i.e.*, which does evil under pretence of observing the law. The seat of the judges is a *sedes iniquitatis*, because it is a centre and source of injustice. *Cf.* Ps. cxxi. 5.

Jerome renders:

> *Numquid particeps erit tui thronus insidiarum*
> *fingens laborem in praecepto?*

21. *Captabunt*, 'make chase after.' The Septuagint read here *yaṣuddu*, instead of the Massoretic *yaghoddu*=*congregantur*. Jer. renders: *Copulabuntur adversus animam justi*.

22. Verse 21 and 22 can be taken together thus: Even though they gather together against the life of the just man, and condemn innocent blood, yet will Yahweh be to me a place of refuge, etc.

Et Deus meus in adjutorium spei meae: Hebrew, 'And my God (will be) a rock, a refuge for me.'

Adjutorium spei meae, as it stands, must be rendered, 'the help in which I hope.' *Cf.* Ps. iv. 2.

23. *In malitia* is sometimes rendered, 'through their wickedness,' sometimes, 'on account of their wickedness.'

Disperdit: Hebrew='exterminate.' Jer. has: *perdet eos.*

PSALM XCIV

A PROCESSIONAL HYMN

THE simplest view of this psalm is to take it as a processional hymn which passes over into a prophetic exhortation, or sermon. It falls naturally into three sections.

(*a*). The community, advancing in solemn procession on one of the great feasts from the city to Sion, chants a hymn unto the might and glory of the Lord. The greatness of Israel's God appears in the world which He has fashioned, and in His exaltation above the gods of the heathens. (Verses 1–5).

(*b*). When the procession reaches the Temple-entrance a choir of priests invites it to enter, reminding the people that, as men do homage to visible earthly rulers, so they must bow down, cast themselves prostrate, and kneel before the Lord of the Temple. (Verses 6–7).

(*c*). With verse 8, the Hymn passes over into a prophetic exhortation. One of the priests, speaking in the person of Yahweh, as Amos or Jeremias would have spoken to a festive assembly, reminds the multitude that the fruit of their festive gladness ought to be the conversion of their hearts to God (*cf.* Jer. xxxiv ; Amos iii. 1). They should be warned by the fate of their forefathers in the Wilderness against unbelief and indifference. If they will now listen to the voice of God who speaks to them through the prophetic speaker they may be privileged to enter into the Rest which was denied to their rebellious and unbelieving forebears. *Cf.* Ps. lxxvii ; Exod. xvii. 7 ; Num. xiv. 23, 28–30 ; Deut. vi. 16 ; xii. 9 ; xxxiii. 8.

The psalm is assigned to David in the Septuagint. The Hebrew text contains no ascription. Theodoret regarded it as a Davidic forecast of the situation in Israel in the time of Josias, and believed that David here speaks in the person of Josias. Hebrews iv. 7 quotes vv. 8-9 as Davidic, and Catholic commentators rightly insist that the Psalm contains nothing which excludes Davidic authorship. Most modern Protestant writers refuse to regard it as a genuinely Davidic psalm, but they differ greatly as to the period to which they would assign the composition of the poem. Those who agree that the psalm was intended for use on one of the great feasts as a liturgical song differ in the determination of the feast—some ascribing it to the Dedication of the Second Temple, others regarding it as a Hymn for the Feast of Tabernacles or for New Year's Day.

An interesting comparison between the two psalters, the *Romanum* and the *Gallicanum,* can be made by putting together the text of

Psalm xciv as it is read in the Vulgate (or *Gallicanum*) text at Matins on the Feast of the Epiphany (3rd Nocturn), and the text from the *Psalterium Romanum* which is read as the invitatory psalm at the beginning of Matins.

Laus Cantici ipsi David.

1. Venite, exsultemus Domino: jubilemus Deo salutari nostro:
2. Præoccupemus faciem ejus in confessione: et in psalmis jubilemus ei.
3. Quoniam Deus magnus Dominus: et Rex magnus super omnes deos.
4. Quia in manu ejus sunt omnes fine terræ: et altitudines montium ipsius sunt.
5. Quoniam ipsius est mare, et ipse fecit illud: et siccam manus ejus formaverunt.

6. Venite adoremus et procidamus: et ploremus ante Dominum, qui fecit nos.
7. Quia ipse est Dominus Deus noster: et nos populus pascuæ ejus, et oves manus ejus.

8. Hodie si vocem ejus audieritis,
9. Nolite obdurare corda vestra:
Sicut in irritatione secundum diem tentationis in deserto: ubi tentaverunt me patres vestri, probaverunt me, et viderunt opera mea.
10. Quadraginta annis offensus fui generationi illi, et dixi: Semper hi errant corde.
11. Et isti non cognoverunt vias meas, ut juravi in ira mea: Si introibunt in requiem meam.

[The people in procession]

1. Come let us hymn to the Lord!
Let us exult in our rescuing God!

2. Let us come before Him early with song,
And with hymns let us exult in Him.

3. For the Lord is a mighty God,
A mighty King over all the gods.

4. In His hands are the ends of the earth;
The mountain-tops are His.

5. His is the sea: He hath made it;
And the dry-land His hands have formed.

[Choir of priests]

6. Come let us bow down, and fall prostrate;
Let us weep before the Lord, our Maker.
7. For He is the Lord, our God,
And we are the people of His pasture, the sheep of His hand.

[Soloist]

8. If ye would hear His voice to-day!

9. "Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
As on the day of Massah in the desert,
When your fathers tempted me,
And tried me, though they saw my deeds.

10. For forty years I was angry with that race:
I said: In heart they evermore stray;
11. Indeed they knew not my ways,
So that I sware to them in my wrath:
They shall not enter into my Rest."

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1. *Laus cantici*: *Cf.* Ps. xc. xci and xcii.

The people exhort each other to glorify God as the Lord of the world, and in particular of Israel. *Jubilare*=praise. God is to be praised as *salutaris*, as Rescuer, Saviour.—(*Cf.* Ps. xxvi. 9.)

The 'face of God' is the divine attitude, or disposition: *praeoccupare faciem ejus* means to secure His favour by timely intercession. *Confessio* is the means by which the divine favour is to be secured (*cf.* Ps. xli. 5). It is apparently implied that timely praise of God may

prevent a change in His present attitude of favour. The timeliness of the praise may, however, simply mean that it is to be offered before, or along with, the morning sacrifice.

Psalmis : *cf.* Ps. lvi. 9, 10.

3. *Cf.* Ps. xlvi. 3 ; xlvii. 2 ; xcv. 4 ; xcvi. 9. The might of Yahweh is revealed especially in the physical world, as verses 4 and 5 explain. In setting Yahweh above the heathen gods the psalmist uses popular phraseology, or employs a recognised literary figure—which does not imply his own acceptance of the existence of such gods.—(*Cf.* Ps. xcv. 4 ; xcvi. 9.)

After verse 3 the *Psalterium Romanum* adds : *quoniam non repellet Dominus plebem suam.* It is interpolated in the Septuagint from verse 14 of the preceding psalm.

4. The greatness of Yahweh is seen peculiarly in nature. His rule is universal. It reaches to the ends of the earth (a better reading than the Hebrew *meḥḳ^e^re 'areṣ*), and the tops of the highest mountains. The *Romanum* reads here : *altitudines montium ipse conspicit.*

5. The *Romanum* reads, *Et aridam fundaverunt* : the reference is to the dry-land as distinct from the sea. The Latin would probably represent the Hebrew better if it read : *et* (*ipsius est*) *sicca quam manus ejus formaverunt.*

6. The words are addressed to the people who are about to enter into the forecourts of the Temple. They may, perhaps, be regarded as spoken by the choir of priests who receive the procession at the Temple-entrance. The summons to worship includes the various attitudes of the worshippers, bowing down, prostrating with face to the ground, and kneeling. *Cf.* 2 Chron. vii. 3 ; Dan. iii. 10.

Ploremus implies a Hebrew *nibhkeh.* The Massoretic text reads *nibhr^e^khah,* 'let us kneel.' It has been suggested that the Greek κλαύσωμεν (*ploremus*) is a corruption of ὀκλάσωμεν ('let us kneel'). Jer. has *flectamus genua.* If *ploremus* is retained, the tears must be understood as tears of thanksgiving.

7. *Populus pascuae* : The *Romanum* has : *Nos autem populus ejus et oves pascuae ejus.* The 'pasture' is Palestine, and the Israelites, who dwell in Palestine, are the special people of Yahweh (*cf.* Ps. lxxiii. 1 ; xxii. 1 ; 2 Kings vii. 8). The 'flock of His hand'=the flock guided by His hand. *Cf.* the symbol of the Good Shepherd, John x. 14, 16.

8. Here the words of the prophet-like speaker begin. We can suppose that he is one of the priestly body. He speaks in the name of Yahweh, prefacing his words by a wish that the people would hear and give heed : 'If ye would but hear His voice to-day!' If they would hear and follow the warnings of the Lord, it would be well with them! It is possible, however, to take the meaning as, 'Whenever ye hear His voice, etc.' The words from *Nolite obdurare* on are to be taken as spoken by Yahweh. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews interprets *hodie* of the period between the conversion

of the individual and the final judgment (Hebrews iii. 7–19), and ascribing this psalm to David argues that the 'Rest' which had been promised to Israel in the days of the conquest of Palestine had not yet been attained in the Davidic period. In the psalm it is most natural to refer *hodie* to the feast at which the psalm was intended to be sung. As the Israelites are bowed down in homage before their God, listening to the solemn words of the speaker who represents the Lord, let them take care lest they should be wanting in loyalty or trust towards the God who is in their midst!

In irritatione secundum diem tentationis: the Greek translators, as in Psalm lxxx. 8, took Meribah and Massah as ordinary substantives. As can be seen from the narrative in Exod. xvii. 1–7 and Num. xx. 1–13. *Irritatio* and *Contentio* are really commemorative place-names. Meribah and Massah might be rendered '*Strife*' and '*Trial*,' so that the passage might run in English: 'Harden not your heart as at Strife: like the day of Trial in the desert.' The people who have come in procession to the Temple are warned not to imitate their ancestors who at Meribah and Massah showed their want of faith in the protecting presence of their Lord. They put Yahweh to the test, though there was no reason for doing so, since they had clearly seen the wonders which He had wrought for them.

Et viderunt—'even though they saw,' or 'had seen.' The *opera*= the miraculous gift of water recorded in Exod. xvii. 6. This manifest token of divine favour made the murmuring and unbelief of the Israelites peculiarly unreasonable. The *Romanum* omits *me* after *probaverunt*.

For the 'proving' at Meribah and Massah, *cf.* Deut. xxxiii. 8; Ps. lxxx. 8; Exod. xvii. 2, 7; Num. xx. 13.

10. The anger of God lasted during the forty years of the desert wanderings; all that time Yahweh endured Israel, but only with loathing—*offensus fui*. The *generatio*=the generation of those who came forth from Egypt. The *Romanum* has *proximus fui generationi huic*—which seems to be based on a misunderstanding of the Greek. The 'nearness' in the context could only be that of hostility.

11. The men of that perverse generation paid no heed to God's dealings with them. Neither the favours nor the chastisements of God could make them realise what the Lord had done for them. The 'ways' of God are the graces and favours which He bestowed on Israel (*cf.* Ps. lxxx. 14).

The indifference and unbelief of Israel compelled the Lord to pronounce with an oath the sentence: 'They shall not enter into my Rest.' The negative oath is expressed, as usual, in affirmative form. The Hebrew oath generally took the form: 'May so and so happen to me, if . . .' Hence the affirmative oath is naturally introduced by a negative particle, *si non*, and the negative oath by an affirmative particle, *si*. The oath is that recorded in Num. xiv. 26*ff*.

The ' Rest ' in the context of the oath is the Promised Land, where Yahweh was about to take up His residence in the midst of His people. The author of Hebrews takes it as the eternal rest of heaven, the sharing in the ' Sabbath-rest ' of God. That the Rest has an eschatological meaning here also is evident.

Ut has here been taken in the sense ' so that.' It might, however, also be rendered, ' how.' In that case the ' ways ' of the Lord would be more clearly defined as being the oath which He swore : ' they knew not my ways, how I sware . . .'

PSALM XCV

YAHWEH, KING AND JUDGE OF THE WORLD

THIS psalm is found with slight variations in 1 Chron. xvi. 23–33 In 1 Chron. xvi we have a poem composed of several psalm passages (civ. 1–15 ; cv. 47, 48) which is said to have been sung at the bringing of the Ark from the house of Obededom to Sion. The authority of the Chronicler stands, therefore, for the ascription of this Psalm xcv. to David. That authority is supported by the title of the psalm in the Septuagint, ' A poem by David when the House was built after the Captivity.' The Septuagint title is probably based on the statements in 1 Chron. xvi. Direct Biblical statements like those of the Chronicler in chapter xvi cannot be set aside, and the Catholic commentator must admit that Psalm xcv is substantially of Davidic origin. The points of obvious contact between this psalm and the second part of Isaias have led nearly all modern non-Catholic commentators to regard Psalm xcv as post-Exilic. Against this, however, it is pointed out by Catholic writers that the apparently Isaian features of the psalm—especially its pronounced universalism, could well have originated from one gifted with the spirit of prophecy, like David. The Davidic origin of Psalm xcv does not, however, exclude the possibility that the Davidic poem has been modified somewhat by editors. Verse 5, for instance, which is remarkably similar to such passages of Isaias as xl. 18–26 ; xli. 21–29 ; xliv. 9–20, may have been inserted in the psalm subsequently to the period of Isaias.

The structure of the psalm is simple. The first six verses contain the New Song. The ancient songs are not grand enough to commemorate the great occasion of the psalm. Hence a new song is required. Its theme is the rule of Yahweh over the whole world—heathen as well as Jewish. The Messianic rule and kingdom are obviously before the poet's mind. In the Messianic Kingdom there will be no contrast of Israel and the Nations, for all the world will equally submit to the sway of the Messianic King. Thus the beginning of the Messianic period is the beginning of the salvation of the heathens—not of their destruction. Instead of the thought that Israel is to attain world-power by victorious battles, we have here the thought that Israel has a spiritual mission to the nations. Israel must make known to all the glory of the one God, Yahweh. The heathen gods must fade away into the nothingness which they

symbolise. The psalmist sees in spirit the proud works of men's hands cast down in the dust before the face of Yahweh, while Majesty and Greatness minister in attendance about the Messianic throne.

The second part of the poem (vv. 7–10) depicts the jubilation of the subjects of the Messianic King when He comes to His throne. They gather together to do Him homage as they were wont to pay homage to earthly kings on their coronation-day. Yahweh is acclaimed as King of the whole world and as Judge of the nations. The poet sees the nations coming in festive procession, bringing gifts to the palace of the King.

The last three verses (11–13) represent Nature as joining in the nations' cry of welcome to the Messianic King. Heaven, earth, sea, land, and forests unite with men in one great song of praise and homage.

The accession of the Messianic King is largely the theme also of the next three psalms. All four should be read and studied together. Psalms xcvii and xcv are very intimately related. Psalm xlv, xxxii, lxxv, and xlvi should be compared and contrasted with Psalm xcv.

1. Canticum ipsi David, Quando domus aedificabatur post captivitatem.	1. A song of David; when the House was being built after the Exile.
Cantate Domino canticum novum: cantate Domino omnis terra.	Sing to the Lord a new song, Sing to the Lord all the earth!
2. Cantate Domino, et benedicite nomini ejus: annuntiate de die in diem salutare ejus.	2. Sing to the Lord; praise ye His name; Proclaim every day His salvation.
3. Annuntiate inter Gentes gloriam ejus, in omnibus populis mirabilia ejus.	3. Recount to the nations His glory, Amid all the peoples His wondrous deeds.
4. Quoniam magnus Dominus, et laudabilis nimis: terribilis est super omnes deos.	4. For great is the Lord, all worthy of praise, More dreadful than all the gods.
5. Quoniam omnes dii Gentium dæmonia: Dominus autem cœlos fecit.	5. For all the gods of the heathen are but demons, But the Lord hath made the heavens.
6. Confessio, et pulchritudo in conspectu ejus: sanctimonia et magnificentia in sanctificatione ejus.	6. Splendour and Majesty are before Him: Holiness and Grandeur are in His shrine.
7. Afferte Domino patriæ Gentium, afferte Domino gloriam et honorem:	7. Bring to the Lord, ye tribes of the nations, Bring to the Lord glory and praise.
8. Afferte Domino gloriam nomini ejus. Tollite hostias, et introite in atria ejus:	8. Bring to the Lord the praise of His name. Bring hither gifts and enter His courts.
9. Adorate Dominum in atrio sancto ejus. Commoveatur a facie ejus universa terra:	9. Do homage to the Lord in His holy shrine; Let all the world tremble before Him.
10. Dicite in Gentibus quia Dominus regnavit.	10. Proclaim to the peoples: The Lord is King;

Etenim correxit orbem terræ qui non commovebitur : judicabit populos in æquitate.	For He hath stablished the earth : It nevermore moveth : He will judge the nations in fairness.
11. Lætentur cœli, et exsultet terra : commoveatur mare, et plenitudo ejus :	11. Let the heavens rejoice, and the earth be glad ; Let the sea and its billows be roused :
12. Gaudebunt campi, et omnia quæ in eis sunt. Tunc exsultabunt omnia ligna silvarum	12. Let the fields and all in them rejoice ; Then shall be glad every tree of the forest,
13. A facie Domini, quia venit : quoniam venit judicare terram. Judicabit orbem terræ in æquitate, et populos in veritate sua.	13. Before the face of the Lord when He cometh, For He cometh to judge the earth. He will judge the world with justice, And the peoples with truth.

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1. *Canticum novum* : the song must be new, for no existing hymn was great enough for the occasion—the coming of Yahweh as Judge of the world. The first summons to song may be regarded as addressed to Israel, the second to the whole world.

2. *De die in diem* : 'daily,' 'from day to day.' Baethgen compares Ps. xviii. 3—but the sense there is different.

3. The greatness and glory of the Lord are to be proclaimed among the Nations. The emphatic universalism of the psalm is not, as modern commentators suppose, unthinkable in a Davidic composition. *Cf.* Ps. xvii.

4. This verse is a quotation from Ps. xlvii. 2. *Cf.* Ps. xciv. 3. The comparison with the heathen gods is merely a literary figure. That the Psalmist does not accept the reality of the heathen gods is clear from verse 5.

5. *Daemonia* : this takes the place of the Hebrew *'elilim,* which may mean 'Nothings' : the Greek translators evidently believed that the heathens worshipped demons either consciously or unconsciously (Similarly 1 Cor. x. 19–20. *Cf.* Gal. iv. 8). Jerome renders *sculptilia.* Over against the mere nothings which the heathens worship is the omnipotent Creator of the heavens. Even if the gods of the heathen were the sun and moon and stars, yet these, whose home is the heavens, have been fashioned by God's omnipotent hand.

6. *Confessio* renders *hodh* which really means 'glory.' Jerome rightly renders *gloria.* The Greek translators were misled, apparently, by the similarity of *hodh,* 'glory,' and *hodhah,* 'to praise" to confess.'

Pulchritudo is not an exact rendering of the Hebrew *hadhar* : this means grandeur or splendour. Jerome has *decor.*

Sanctimonia corresponds to *'oz,* 'strength' (*cf.* Ps. viii. 3) : Jerome renders *fortitudo.*

Sanctificatio means 'shrine' or 'sanctuary' (Hebrew, *miḳdash*).

Jerome has *sanctuarium*. Praise and Splendour, Strength and Beauty are, perhaps, thought of as spirits ministering round the throne of Yahweh.

7–9: these verses are borrowed with some modifications from Ps. xxviii. 1–2. Instead of the angels of Ps. xxviii the foreign nations appear.

8. The glory of His name is given to Yahweh by recognising Him as the only true God. The Chronicler substitutes for 'into His courts,' 'before Him.'

9. *In atrio sancto ejus*: the Massoretic text has *b^e^hadhrath ḳodhesh*, which is usually rendered, 'in holy adornment.' The Greeks read *ḥaṣroth* instead of *hadhrath*.

Commoveatur, 'tremble in reverential awe.'

10. In the *Psalterium Romanum* the words *a ligno* follow *regnavit*. Justin (Tryph. vii. 3) accuses the Jews of having omitted these words from the psalm. *Cf.* the hymn, *Vexilla Regis*, l. 12.

Correxit: instead of *tikkon* the Greek translators read *tikken*. *Correxit* must be here rendered as 'established,' 'made firm.'

Judicabit populos in aequitate anticipates verse 13, and is wanting in the parallel text of Chronicles. It was, perhaps, interpolated here from Ps. ix. 9.

12. An echo of Isaias. *Cf.* Is. lv. 12.

Tunc, i.e., in the Messianic period. When Yahweh assumes complete control of the nations, the prophecy in Is. xliv. 23 will be fulfilled:

> "Rejoice, ye heavens, for Yahweh hath done it:
> Be glad ye depths of the earth!
> Burst forth, ye mountains, into shouts of joy,
> The forest and all the trees thereof;
> For Yahweh hath rescued Jacob
> And in Israel He shall be glorified."

13. *Venit* represents the prophetic perfect of the Hebrew.

Veritas: the loyalty of Yahweh towards His own people will be the reason why He shall judge the heathens in justice.

PSALM XCVI

YAHWEH—KING OF THE WORLD

THE theme of this psalm, like that of Psalm xcv and xcviii, is the coming of Yahweh to His throne as Messianic King. Emphasis is placed here rather on the inner than the outer glory of the event—rather on the victory of truth and justice in the Messianic period, than on the external splendour and majesty of the Messianic King. In the first verse the announcement of the accession of the Messias is made. Since the whole earth is subject to the Messianic King, the earth, including the far off 'Isles of the Sea,' takes up the hymn to the King. *Cf.* Ps. xlvi. 2*ff.*; xcv. 1.

Verses 2–6 describe the actual coming forth of the King. We have here the usual familiar features of Old Testament Theophanies (*cf.* Micheas i. 3; Habacuc iii. 3*ff.*; Ps. xvii. 8*f.*; Ps. lxxvi. 17*f.*, etc.). As the Messianic King advances to His throne the clouds gather round Him. Fire encircles Him, and His lightnings flash over the world. Before the intensity of the fires which encompass Him, mountains melt like wax before the flame. The earth trembles as in an earthquake. Here are all the features of the Theophany of the Davidic Psalm xvii, and here we recognise the ancient literary forms employed in the Song of Deborah (Judges v. 4, 5). The mighty God of nature who is here described is represented, further, as the Lord of right and justice. As in Ps. lxxxviii. 15, Right and Justice are the stay of His throne.

Verses 7–9 celebrate the victory of truth over error. Before the Messianic King the false gods fade away, and their worshippers stand abashed. But while the 'Day of Yahweh' is a day of defeat for the heathen, it is a time of rejoicing for Sion and the towns round about her. The rejoicing is, however, not so much over political success (which may be here implied), as over the victory of truth.

As verses 7–9 deal with the victory of truth over falsehood, so verses 10–11 celebrate the triumph of justice in the Messianic age. Iniquity is overcome, and the pious are set free from its thrall. Men walk in the light of God's face, and their hearts are filled with joy and peace. Let all men rejoice, then, in Yahweh and join in the praise of His name.

It may be that the glad cry: "Yahweh is King," refers to some particular intervention of the Lord on behalf of Israel, and the entire psalm may, possibly, be the commemoration of such intervention. Interpreting it thus some commentators have regarded this psalm as a

hymn of thanksgiving for the release from the captivity of Babylon. But whether or not the psalm celebrates a particular intervention of Yahweh on behalf of Israel, it must be admitted that the imagery of the psalm is definitely Messianic, and that the establishment of divine rule on earth which is here described is essentially the setting up of the Messianic Kingship. Even the Author of Hebrews seems to take the psalm as primarily a celebration of the inauguration of the Messianic period (*cf.* Heb. i. 6). The absence of all immediate suggestion in this psalm that the reign of the Messias is to be preceded by violence or destruction, and the emphasis on truth and justice as the stay of the Messianic throne imply a more spiritual outlook on the Messianic period than we find, for instance, in Ps. cxlix.

In style and thought this psalm stands in the closest relations with the preceding psalm. The imagery of the first half of Ps. xcvi recalls, as has been said, that of Ps. xvii, which is undoubtedly Davidic. While then, in the Hebrew there is no ascription to an author, the Vulgate title (following the Greek), 'By David, when order was again established in his land,' implies a possible and reasonable view on the origin of the psalm. We do not know the precise reference in the phrase, 'When order was again established in his land.' Davidic origin of the psalm would not be affected by the admission of the presence of post-Davidic editorial elements in the text (as, for instance, in vv. 7–8). Hoberg, one of the most conservative Catholic commentators on the Psalms, is inclined to regard the psalm as a post-Davidic elaboration of verses 8–15 of Ps. xvii. He thinks that a view like this which makes the nucleus of the psalm Davidic sufficiently explains the ascription of Ps. xcvi to David in the title.

1. Huic David, Quando terra eius restituta est.

Dominus regnavit, exsultet terra: lætentur insulæ multæ.
2. Nubes, et caligo in circuitu ejus: justitia, et judicium correctio sedis ejus.
3. Ignis ante ipsum præcedet, et inflammabit in circuitu inimicos ejus.
4. Illuxerunt fulgura ejus orbi terræ: vidit, et commota est terra.
5. Montes, sicut cerà fluxerunt a facie Domini: a facie Domini omnis terra.

6. Annuntiaverunt cœli justitiam ejus: et viderunt omnes populi gloriam ejus.

1. By David, when his land was again set in order.

(Yahweh ascends His throne.)
The Lord is King—let the earth rejoice,
Let all the islands exult.
2. Clouds and darkness are about Him:
Right and justice are the stay of His throne.
3. Fire goeth before Him
And devoureth His foes round about.

4. His lightnings illumine the world,
The earth hath seen it, and is in throes;

5. The mountains melt like wax before the Lord,—
All the earth before the face of the Lord.
6. The heavens proclaim His justice,
And all the peoples behold His glory.

7. Confundantur omnes, qui adorant sculptilia : et qui gloriantur in simulacris suis.
Adorate eum omnes Angeli ejus :
8. Audivit, et lætata est Sion.
Et exsultaverunt filiæ Judæ, propter judicia tua Domine :
9. Quoniam tu Dominus Altissimus super omnem terram : nimis exaltatus es super omnes deos.

10. Qui diligitis Dominum odite malum : custodit Dominus animas sanctorum suorum, de manu peccatoris liberabit eos.

11. Lux orta est justo, et rectis corde lætitia.
12. Lætamini justi in Domino : et confitemini memoriæ sanctificationis ejus.

(The victory of Truth.)
7. Confounded are all who worship things graven,
They who boast of their idols ;
All ye gods do Him homage !

8. Sion heareth and rejoiceth ;
The daughters of Sion exult,
Because of Thy judgments, O Lord.
9. For thou, Lord, art Highest over earth,
Exalted above all the gods.

(The triumph of Justice.)
10. Hate, ye who love the Lord, evil.
The Lord guardeth the souls of His loyal ones :
From the sinner's hand He saveth them.
11. A light shineth forth for the just one,
And delight for the upright of heart.
12. Rejoice ye just in the Lord,
And praise ye His holy name.

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1. The reference in *Quando terra ejus restituta est*, is obscure. The restoration of the land in question must have taken place towards the close of David's career, when Israel enjoyed comparative peace from her foreign enemies. Modern non-Catholic commentators, for the most part, attach no importance to the Greek (Vulgate) title of this psalm.

Dominus regnavit is the glad cry of the psalmist at Yahweh's accession : he would have the whole world to join with him in his rejoicing. The *insulae multae* are the heathen lands in general. *Cf.* Is. xli. 1, 5 ; xlii. 4, 10. See Ps. lxxi. 19. The 'Isles' meant originally the coast-lands of the Mediterranean ; but in the second half of Isaias the word is frequently used to designate the outlying heathen lands. The 'Nations' are the heathen lands which surround Palestine. Those who seek a particular historical occasion for the psalm find it usually in the return from the Exile.

2. Compare Ps. xvii. 8–15. The Song of Deborah is the oldest description of this kind of Theophany.

Yahweh, in Thy progress from Seir,
In Thy march from the field of Edom,
Earth quaked, yea, heaven (rocked),
Yea, the clouds dripped water.
The mountains shook before Yahweh,
Before Yahweh, the God of Israel.—(Judges v. 4–5.)

Even in the days of Deborah the literary method of depicting the coming of Yahweh to Israel's rescue was comparatively fixed.

For the 'Day of Yahweh' as darkness, see Soph. i. 15 ; Joel ii. 2.

Compare also the thought of God as dwelling in darkness in 3 Kings viii. 12 ; Exod. xx. 21.

Correctio=makhon, 'support,' 'foundation' : *cf.* Ps. lxxxviii. 15.

Verses 2, 3, 6 resemble closely Ps. xlix. 3–6.

3. For the various features of the Theophany compare the commentary on Ps. xvii. 8*ff*.

4. Compare Ps. lxxvi. 18, 19 ; xxviii. 8 ; lxxvi. 17.

5. Compare Micheas i. 4.

A facie Domini omnis terra ; this should be corrected according to the Greek and Hebrew into *A facie Domini omnis terrae.*

6. The glory of Yahweh which the peoples have seen is the overthrow of the foes of truth and justice who were the foes of Yahweh and of Israel. In this overthrow the Lord has shown His omnipotence.

7. If the psalm is to be taken as commemorating the release from the Exile, the worshippers of images are, probably, in the first instance, the Babylonians.

Adorate : the Hebrew has the perfect, not the imperative.

Angeli ejus : the Hebrew has : 'All the gods do Him homage.' As in Ps. viii. 6 the Greek translators substituted 'angels' for *'elohim* (*cf.* Ps. cxxxvii. 1). In Hebrews the text is quoted as it stands here. Jerome has : *Adorate eum omnes dii.*

8. Compare Ps. xlvii. 12. The news that has been heard, and which causes Sion to rejoice, is the accession of the Messianic King, or that intervention of God on behalf of Israel which may have inspired this poem.

9. Compare Ps. xlvi. 3–10 ; xciv. 3.

10. *Odite malum* : *qui oditis malum* would be better. The Massoretic text, however, as well as the Sept., Targum, and Jerome have the imperative. The Syriac has the perfect.

11. The 'light' is salvation, rescue, primarily. But there is here the idea also of walking in the light of God's face.

Orta est ; the Hebrew *zarua'*, 'sown,' ought to be corrected into *zaraḥ*, 'has risen.' Confusion of *'ayin* and *ḥeth* is found also elsewhere. *Cf.* Ps. xiii. 6.

12. This verse looks like a fusion of Ps. xxxi. 11 and xxix. 5.

Memoriae sanctificationis ejus : 'His holy name.'

PSALM XCVII

YAHWEH, THE SALVATION OF THE PEOPLES

LIKE the preceding, this psalm, is largely taken up with the End-period, the Messianic age. It is more closely connected in thought with Ps. xcv than with Ps. xcvi. Here, as in Ps. xcv, there is question of a "new song." The occasion of the poem is here also obscure, but the predominance of Messianic imagery is just as marked in this as in the preceding psalms. Hence if the psalm was intended to commemorate some victorious intervention of God on behalf of Israel, that intervention is viewed as a phase, or foreshadowing, of Messianic rule. The presence of ideas and literary forms resembling closely those found in Isaias xlii–xliv is characteristic of this psalm, as of the preceding, so that the ascription of the psalm to David must be understood in the same way as in Ps. xcvi. Indeed, the peculiarly close connection of verses 1–3 with Isaias lii. 10 and lix. 16 ; lxiii. 5, suggests that this psalm is more completely a product of the period of Deutero-Isaias than even Ps. xcvi. It is more exact, therefore, to speak of this psalm simply as 'Davidic,' than to ascribe it to David as author.

The structure of the psalm is clear. In verses 1–3 we have the "new song." The psalmist calls for the new song to celebrate the establishment of the unquestioned rule of Yahweh over the nations. By the might of His arm the Lord has compelled the nations to acknowledge His rule. This the psalmist regards as the bringing of salvation to Israel, so that the overthrow of God's foes is represented as an act of divine favour towards Israel—as the giving to Israel its rights against the nations. Thus it is here implied that the accession of Yahweh to the Messianic throne has been preceded by a victory over, and humiliation of, the heathen peoples. But when God's purposes in the punishment of the heathen have been attained, then the heathen also share in the general salvation. Thus, the universality of grace is made to depend on Judgment—the world-judgment which we meet with so often elsewhere.

After His victory Yahweh takes His seat as King. As an earthly King is applauded when he comes to his throne, so all the world acclaims Yahweh (vv. 4–6). The heathens turn away from their gods and join with Israel in welcoming the Lord as King and Saviour of the world. The ceremonial of welcome and joyous acclamation is thought of after the manner of 4 Kings xi, xii. *Cf.* Numbers xxiii. 21, and Ps. xliv.

The poet now passes on to describe (in vv. 7–9) how all nature joins in the chorus of applause and jubilation which greets Yahweh's accession. The ocean thunders its joy; the rivers clap hands, and the mountains burst forth into shouts of rejoicing—" before the Lord who cometh to judge the earth."

1. Psalmus ipsi David.

Cantate Domino canticum novum: quia mirabilia fecit.
Salvavit sibi dextera ejus: et brachium sanctum ejus.
2. Notum fecit Dominus salutare suum: in conspectu Gentium revelavit justitiam suam.
3. Recordatus est misericordiæ suæ, et veritatis suæ domui Israel.
Viderunt omnes termini terræ salutare Dei nostri.

4. Jubilate Deo omnis terra: cantate, et exsultate, et psallite.
5. Psallite Domino in cithara, in cithara et voce psalmi:
6. In tubis ductilibus, et voce tubæ corneæ.
Jubilate in conspectu regis Domini:

7. Moveatur mare, et plenitudo ejus: orbis terrarum, et qui habitant in eo.
8. Flumina plaudent manu, simul montes exsultabunt
9. A conspectu Domini: quoniam venit judicare terram.
Judicabit orbem terrarum in justitia, et populos in æquitate.

1. A Psalm of David.

Sing unto the Lord a new song,
For He hath wrought wonders.
His right hand hath helped Him,
And His holy arm.
2. The Lord hath made known His salvation,
He hath shown to the heathens His justice.
3. He hath been mindful of His favour,
And of His truth to the House of Israel.
All the ends of the earth have seen
The salvation of our God.

4. Exult unto the Lord all the world,
Hymn and rejoice and make music,
5. Make music unto the Lord on the zither,
On the zither with loud-ringing song;
6. With clash of trumpets and horns,
Exult before Yahweh, the King.

7. Let the sea be roused and its waves,
The earth and what dwells thereon.
8. Let the rivers clap hands,
Let the hills rejoice
9. Before the face of the Lord when He cometh,
To judge the earth.
He judgeth the earth in justice,
And the nations in fairness.

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1. *Ipsi David*: see the Introduction to the psalm.

Canticum novum: as in Ps. xxxii. 3; xcv. 1; cxliii. 9; cxlix. 1; xxxix. 4; Is. xlii. 10. It is a song not hitherto existing in the liturgical books, but composed specially for a particular occasion. The newness of the song implies the importance of the occasion.

Mirabilia are the great deeds which Yahweh has wrought for Israel's salvation and His own glory. These He has wrought by His own strength alone.

Salvavit: Hebrew *hoshi'ah*, 'wrought salvation.' The Latin ought to be, *salvavit ei dextera ejus*. *Et brachium sanctum ejus* looks incomplete. We should expect a parallel to *salvavit*, etc., thus:

His right hand wrought for him salvation;
His holy arm succoured him;

or something similar. *Cf.* Is. lxiii. 5.

With 1*b*–3 compare Is. lii. 10 : *Paravit Dominus brachium sanctum suum in oculis omnium gentium, et videbunt omnes fines terrae salutare Dei nostri.* The salvation is that which has been granted to Israel ; it is the same thing as the " justice " of the second half of the verse.

3. The *misericordia* and *veritas*, the grace and fidelity, of God appear together as usual.

It would be better to read, with the Greek and the *Psalt. Romanum*, *misericordiae suae Jacob*, thus supplying a parallel to ' Israel.'

4. *Cf.* Is. lii. 9. Compare also Ps. xxxii. 2–3 ; xlvi. 2, 7 ; lxv. 1 ; xcix. 1.

5. *Cithara* : *cf.* Ps. xxxii. 2. *Psalmus*=' hymnody.'

6. *Tubis ductilibus* : the silver trumpets which Moses prepared at the command of God (Num. x. 2) are described as *ductiles*, and we may regard *ductiles* here in the psalm as a gloss from Num. x. 2. The word may be translated ' beaten.' The trumpets here named in the Hebrew text, the *ḥ^a^ṣoṣ^e^roth*, were those especially used by the priests (Num. x. 2–10). The other word used here in the Hebrew is *shophar*. This is a more general word, and may be rendered, after the Latin, as ' cornet.' The psalmist means that trumpets of metal and trumpets of horn are to be used.

Jubilate ; the Hebrew word *hari'u* means ' raise the *t^e^ru'ah*,'—the cry of welcome and acclamation for the King. *Cf.* Num. xxiii. 21.

7. With vv. 7–9 compare Ps. xcv. 11–13. *Plenitudo*=' what fills it.'

8. For the clapping of hands see 4 Kings xi. 12. *Cf.* Is. v. 12.

9. Here, as before, it is emphasised that right and justice are the stay of the Messianic throne.

PSALM XCVIII

HOLY IS THE LORD, OUR GOD

THIS is a hymn to the holy God of Israel, the King of the world who sits enthroned on the Cherubim. The psalm is divided into three strophes, which are clearly marked off from each other by a refrain.

The holy and mighty God of Israel has now again shown clearly to the world that He is the Lord and King of Israel, and the Ruler of the world. Let men, therefore, praise His dread and mighty name, for He is holy. (vv. 1–3.)

God has shown His might by exercising justice on behalf of Jacob, by intervening, that is, on Israel's behalf against the heathen. The overthrow of Israel's enemies is also the overthrow of the enemies of Yahweh. For His justice in helping Israel the Lord is to be extolled. Holy is He. (vv. 4–5.)

Yahweh is not merely mighty and just. He is gracious as well. In the olden days He was ever accessible to the repentant prayers of His people—even though the whole history of Israel is a history of disloyalty and sin on the part of the people. His graciousness was never deserved by the nation Israel, but it was often moved by the prayers of such heroes of the faith as Moses, Aaron, and Samuel. There are still in Israel men loyal to God, and the recent intervention of Yahweh in defence of His people may have been due to their prayers. In full recognition of the gracious mercies of the Lord let Israel bow down in homage before Him and praise His holiness. (vv. 5–9.)

There is nothing opposed to Davidic authorship in the general tone of the psalm. Many modern non-Catholic critics admit that the psalm is pre-Exilic. Some Protestant writers find the immediate occasion of the poem—the intervention of Yahweh which it celebrates—in the defeat of the army of Sanherib: others are willing to put it back as far as the beginnings of Hebrew prophetic literature in the middle of the eighth century B.C. Catholic critics while emphasising, in conformity with tradition, the Davidic origin of the psalm, admit here also that a certain amount of post-Davidic editorial work may, perhaps, be traced in the poem. Here, as in the other '*Dominus regnavit*' psalms, Messianic colouring is clearly present.

1. Psalmus ipsi David.

Dominus regnavit, irascantur populi: qui sedet super Cherubim, moveatur terra.

2. Dominus in Sion magnus: et excelsus super omnes populos.
3. Confiteantur nomini tuo magno: quoniam terribile, et sanctum est:

4. Et honor regis judicium diligit.
Tu parasti directiones: judicium et justitiam in Jacob tu fecisti.
5. Exaltate Dominum Deum nostrum, et adorate scabellum pedum ejus: quoniam sanctum est.

6. Moyses et Aaron in sacerdotibus ejus: et Samuel inter eos, qui invocant nomen ejus:
Invocabant Dominum, et ipse exaudiebat eos:
7. In columna nubis loquebatur ad eos.
Custodiebant testimonia ejus, et præceptum quod dedit illis.
8. Domine Deus noster tu exaudiebas eos: Deus tu propitius fuisti eis, et ulciscens in omnes adinventiones eorum.
9. Exaltate Dominum Deum nostrum, et adorate in monte sancto ejus: quoniam sanctus Dominus Deus noster.

1. A Psalm of David.

'The Lord is King,' let the nations tremble!—
Who throneth on the Cherubs—let the earth shudder!
2. Mighty is the Lord on Sion,
And exalted above all the peoples.
3. Let men praise Thy mighty Name,
For it is fearful and holy.

4. The glorious King loveth justice:
Just order Thou hast established:
Justice and right Thou hast wrought in Jacob.

5. Praise ye the Lord our God,
And bow low before His footstool,
'For He is holy.'

6. Moses and Aaron are among His priests,
And Samuel among those who call on His Name:
They called unto the Lord and He heard them;
7. In the pillar of cloud He spake to them:
They kept His behests, and the Law which He gave them.

8. O Lord our God Thou didst hear them:
Thou wast gracious to them,
Thou didst avenge all their evil deeds.

9. Praise ye the Lord our God,
And bow down before His holy hill;
For the Lord, our God, is holy.

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1. The triumphant cry, *Dominus regnavit*, implies, as has already been said, that some striking event has taken place which proves that Yahweh is still, in truth, the King of Israel. We do not know what that event was, but it has so clearly shown forth the might of the Lord that the nations are bidden to submit tremblingly to the God of Israel. *Irascantur* represents the Hebrew *yirg^{e}zu*; whereas in Ps. iv. 5, in the clause, *Irascimini et nolite peccare, raghaz* was taken by the Greeks as meaning 'to be moved with anger.' It really means in both contexts 'to be moved by fear, to tremble.' The parallel *moveatur terra* makes that meaning certain here. Jerome renders: *Commoveantur populi.*

Qui sedet super cherubim is an epithet of Yahweh (Ps. lxxix. 2); it is to be taken as a second subject to *regnavit* (=*malakh*): 'Yahweh is King. He who is enthroned on the Cherubs (is King).' Jerome has: *sessor cherubim*; *concutiatur terra*. As enthroned on the

Cherubim, Yahweh is the mighty God of the Covenant. The peoples are the heathen peoples who had been the enemies of the Lord and of His people. The thought of the universal rule of the Messias underlies this verse.

2. Messianic imagery is obvious here.

3. *Confiteantur*: the subject of this verb is not *populi*: this verb is used in the indefinite sense, 'Let them praise,' 'Let men praise.' The adjectives 'great' and 'fearful' are to be connected with the Name: but in the Hebrew text 'holy' is most probably a description of Yahweh Himself, rather than of His name: 'Holy is He'; see verse 5 and 9. The words 'Holy is He' may be thought of as chanted by the multitude.

4. *Honor regis*: commentators on the Vulgate have frequently taken *honor regis* as a construction like *longitudo dierum* (Ps. xx. 5); taken thus it would mean *rex honoris*, 'the glorious King.' *Honor* represents the Hebrew *'oz*, which means 'strength' or, 'power.' It has been proposed to regard the clause *honor regis judicium diligit* as connected with verse 3 rather than with verse 4*b*, and to read *honorem regis* as if it were an object of *confiteantur*. This view has against it the difficulty of the refrain in verse 3. We naturally expect a new beginning after the refrain. The Hebrew *w^e'oz melekh mishpaṭ 'ahebh*—'And the strength of a king who loveth judgment,' which is literally reproduced in the Vulgate, sounds strangely, and various emendations have been proposed. Zenner omits *mishpaṭ 'ahebh*, and makes *'oz melekh* the object of *konanta* (*parasti*), and renders thus:

> 'A kingly power Thou hast established,
> Fairness, right, and justice Thou hast practised towards Jacob.'

It has been proposed, also, to read *ya'oz*, 'may he be strong,' instead of *w^e'oz*, 'and the strength.' Thus we should get the sense, 'May the King that loveth justice be strong.' It would be useless, however, to enumerate the various views of commentators on the Hebrew text of this passage. The Vulgate, considered in itself, conveys the comparatively clear and suitable thought that to love justice is becoming to the honour or majesty of God. As Theodoret puts it: 'To love justice makes the King honourable.'

Parasti directiones: 'Thou hast set up due order.' *Directiones* (=*mesharim*) is equivalent to *judicium* and *justitia*. The older commentators take *directio* mostly in an active sense as, 'guidance,' 'precepts,' 'the law,' etc. It is better, however, to regard *directiones* as explained here by *judicium* and *justitia*. These two words employed together seem to cover the whole sphere of uprightness—fairness of action and uprightness of heart. The verse states that the Lord has established the rights of Israel as against the world. He has done so by the acts of graciousness towards Israel which have proved that He is still in very truth the King of Israel. For *directio*

(in the singular) see Ps. xliv. 7; cxviii. 7. *In Jacob*='in the case of Jacob,' 'towards Jacob.' The justice of Yahweh towards Israel consists in the loyal performance of His part as Covenant-God of Israel.

5. Since the Lord is just, as well as holy and mighty, He must be praised.

The *scabellum* might be the Ark on which Yahweh is enthroned, or the Temple, or the Holy City in general. In verse 9 we have the Holy Mountain instead of the footstool—from which it may, perhaps, be inferred that the footstool here is Mount Sion. *Cf.* Ps. cix. 1; Is. lxvi. 1; lx. 13.

Quoniam sanctum est: from the Hebrew we can see that the reference is to the Lord, rather than to the *scabellum*. Hence we should have here, *Sanctus est*. These are the words of the throng in response to the psalmist's exhortation to worship the just God of Israel.

6. This third strophe deals with the mercies of God towards Israel. He has not shown Himself merely mighty and just towards His people. He has been much more kind and gracious towards them than they have deserved. Had he been strictly just towards them, they would have come to naught. But at the tearful intercession of heroes of prayer and saintliness like Moses, Aaron and Samuel, He stayed His just wrath against their constant sins and displayed His mercy rather than His justice. For the prayer of Moses see Exod. xvii. 10, and for that of Samuel, 1 Kings vii. 9; prayer was the constant function of the High Priest Aaron. In Num. xii. 5 God speaks to Moses and Aaron out of the pillar of cloud (of which the *Shekhinah* over the Ark was the continuation). The voice of God to Samuel (1 Kings iii. 4*ff.*) may have come out of the *Shekhinah*. Moses is spoken of as a priest: it was Moses who consecrated the first High Priest, and before the consecration of Aaron, Moses, as mediator between God and the people, performed priestly functions (Ex. xxiv. 8). Samuel, though he also seems to have performed priestly functions, is put among the *invocantes nomen Domini*. Any pious Israelite could call on the name of the Lord, but there is reference here, probably, to some solemn prophetic manner of calling on the Name of Yahweh. The extraordinary influence of the prayers of Moses and Samuel with God is referred to, in a way which strongly recalls this psalm-passage, in Jer. xv. 1: Then said the Lord to me: 'Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet would my heart not turn to this people.'

It is possible that the psalmist has in mind here the possibility that now, as in the past, there are heroes of prayer in Israel, at whose intercession recent great things have been accomplished. But his main purpose is to emphasise the graciousness of the Lord's mercies towards Israel in the past. It was not in view of any merit of the

whole people of Israel that Yahweh did not abandon them to the destruction which they deserved. In all the nation there were but a few genuinely loyal servants of the Lord, and because of the prayers of these the sinful race of Israel was spared. It is highly important to note the stress which the psalmist here lays on the efficacy of intercessory prayer.

The subject of *invocabant* is indefinite—the whole class of *invocantes nomen Domini* (and not Moses, Aaron, and Samuel merely). Whenever the Hebrews turned to God with prayer of like spirit with that of the ancient saints, such prayer was heard.

7. *Custodiebant* may be taken relatively, *eos qui custodiebant*. In the pillar of cloud Yahweh answered those who kept His laws (*testimonia*). It is not necessary to limit the reference here to Moses and Aaron, for, though it was only to these that God spoke from out the pillar of cloud, it might be said that every pious Israelite whose prayers before the Shekhinah were favourably answered, was spoken to from out the pillar of cloud. This interpretation would make it easier to explain the *adinventiones* of the following verse.

8. *Ulciscens in omnes adinventiones eorum*: this might be taken as meaning that God avenged on the Israelites their own evil deeds, or implying that God avenged the evil things which they (God's loyal worshippers) had to endure at the hands of others. Kimchi and others who confine the reference in 'them' and 'their' to Moses and Aaron, explain the evil deeds as those which were done against Moses and Aaron (especially the rebellion of Core and his associates). Bellarmine explains: *Ulciscens fuisti omnes injurias quas ipsi patiebantur ab iniquis*. This sense is less likely than the other. God was gracious to His people; yet though long-suffering and merciful, He was a jealous God, and sent His people from time to time such trials as would remind them of their disloyalty towards Him. For *adinventio cf.* Ps. xxvii. 4; cv. 29, 39.

9. Here again the psalmist invites the Israelites to worship their holy, mighty, and merciful God and King in His Temple on Sion. Again the people answer, as in verse 5 (and, probably, verse 3), 'Yea, holy is He.'

PSALM XCIX

A HYMN OF THANKSGIVING

ACCORDING to the title, this psalm, is a hymn of thanksgiving, and from verse 4 we see that it is a processional hymn. It was sung as the people were about to enter the gates of the Temple for a thanksgiving-sacrifice. It is divided into two strophes, (*a*) verses 1–3 ; (*b*) verses 4–5. The first strophe was sung by the people, and the second by the Temple-priests.

In the first strophe the theme of the poem is announced : Yahweh alone is God ; Israel is His people. All the world is called on to worship Yahweh, the God of the world. Israel is asked to rejoice because the mighty God of all things has chosen Israel to be His own.

In the second strophe the priests invite the multitude to enter the Temple with praising song, for the great God of Israel is all goodness and favour, and ever faithful to His own. Thus the second strophe develops the theme announced in the first.

Neither in the Hebrew nor the Vulgate is the psalm ascribed to an author.

1. Psalmus in confessione.	1. A Psalm for the thanksgiving-sacrifice.
	(The People.)
2. Jubilate Deo omnis terra : servite Domino in lætitia. Introite in conspectu ejus, in exsultatione.	2. Rejoice unto God all ye lands : In gladness serve ye the Lord ; Enter before Him with jubilee.
3. Scitote quoniam Dominus ipse est Deus : ipse fecit nos, et non ipsi nos : Populos ejus, et oves pascuæ ejus :	3. Know ye that Yahweh is God : He hath made us, we are His : His people and the sheep of His pasture.
	(The Priests.)
4. Introite portas ejus in confessione, atria ejus in hymnis : confitemini illi. Laudate nomen ejus :	4. Enter His gates with thanksgiving, His courts with song : Give Him thanks ; bless His name ;
5. Quoniam sauvis est Dominus, in æternum misericordia ejus, et usque in generationem et generationem veritas ejus.	5. For gracious is the Lord ; Forever endureth His favour, And for ages unending His truth.

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1. *In confessione* : *cf.* Ps. xciv. 2 ; xcix. 4 ; cxlvi. 7. The title is rightly explained by the Targum as meaning 'For the thank-offering' (*cf.* Lev. vii. 11, 12). It is possible that the thank-offering referred to was for some specific divine favour. But it may, on the

other hand, have been merely one of the regular thank-offerings. It is probable that the psalm was not a song of thanks for any special intervention of Yahweh on behalf of Israel, but rather a hymn of thanksgiving for the special election of Israel.

Servite ; in the sense of divine worship. *Cf.* Ps. ii. 11. *In conspectu*, for *in conspectum*. The psalmist insists, as St. Paul so often does, on the need for gladness in the service of God. The gladness here referred to is the demonstrative rejoicing of the hymns mentioned in verse 4.

3. Yahweh, the God of Israel, is the sole God. He has made Israel, *i.e.*, He has chosen it out from among all peoples to be His own special possession. Through Israel He has willed to become known to the nations. Israel is, therefore, the herald of His revelation, and for this all peoples should join with Israel in her hymn of thanks for her special election.

Et non ipsi nos : this is a very prosaic phrase. A slight change in the Massoretic text, the substitution of *w^elo* (' and His ') for *w^elo'*, ' and not,' gives the sense, ' and we are His.' Jerome renders rightly : *Ipse fecit nos et ipsius sumus*. The change suggested in the Massoretic text is supported by the Targum and by many Hebrew MSS. *Populus ejus*, etc., *cf.* Ps. xciv. 7.

4. The doors are those which open into the atria of the Temple.

5. *Suavis*=dulcis. Hebrew, *tobh*, ' good.'

In aeternum misericordia ejus : these words were often sung when thanksgiving processions were entering the Temple. *Cf.* Ps. cxvii ; Jer. xxxiii. 11 ; 2 Chron. v. 13 ; vii. 6 ; Esdras iii. 11.

PSALM C

A MIRROR FOR RULERS

IN this psalm a ruler lays down the principles on which he intends to base his rule, and announces his determination to secure from his subjects the fulfilment of their obligations as subjects.

In verse 1 the singer declares that graciousness and justice will be the foundation of his rule, and that perfection of conduct will be his special study. In verses 2*b*–4 he declares that he will be strenuously watchful over himself, and that he will keep evil men far apart from him. The proud he will discard (verse 5), but loyal and virtuous citizens he will care for, and take into the royal house (6). He will seek always to purify the Holy City and the Land, of evil-doers (7–8).

The programme of rule here set out is fully in harmony with all that is known of the policy of David, and there is, therefore, no difficulty in accepting the ascription of the psalm to David made in the title. The immediate occasion of the psalm may have been the transference of the Ark to Sion (2 Kings vi. 11*ff*.). Theodoret regards the psalm as a forecast of the reign of King Josias: other writers have assigned its composition to Ezechias. Modern critics are more inclined to regard the psalm as containing rather the programme of the pious community of Israel, than that of a ruler of Israel. It is, however, much more natural to take the psalm as giving the thoughts of an individual, and of a Ruler. It resembles closely the Davidic psalm xxv. Theodoret tells us that certain Codices of the Greek Psalter assigned this psalm to the fourth day of the week. It may, therefore, be inferred that it was used in the public liturgy on Wednesdays at the time when the Septuagint version of the Psalter was made. In the new Breviary Psalter this psalm appears in *Lauds* of Wednesday (instead of, as formerly, in *Matins* of Saturday).

1. Psalmus ipsi David.

Misericordiam, et judicium cantabo tibi Domine:
Psallam,
2. Et intelligam in via immaculata, quando venies ad me.

Perambulabam in innocentia cordis mei, in medio domus meæ.
3. Non proponebam ante oculos meos rem injustam: facientes prævaricationes odivi.

1. A Psalm of David

Of graciousness and right I would sing,
To Thee, O Lord, I would chant;

2. I would give thought to the Perfect Way.
When wilt Thou come to me?

In simplicity of heart I will walk,
In the midst of my house.
3. I will put naught that is unjust before my eyes;
The doers of evil I will hate.

4. Non adhæsit mihi cor pravum : declinantem a me malignum non cognoscebam.

4. No ruthless heart will cleave to me ;
The impious who turneth away from me, I shall not know.

5. Detrahentem secreto proximo suo, hunc persequebar.
Superbo oculo, et insatiabili corde, cum hoc non edebam.

5. Whoso slandereth his neighbour in secret,
Him shall I pursue.
With the man of proud eyes and insatiable craving,
I will hold no friendship.

6. Oculi mei ad fideles terræ ut sedeant mecum : ambulans in via immaculata, hic mihi ministrabat.

6. For the trusty ones of the land I will seek,
That they may dwell with me.
Whoso walketh on a blameless path,
He shall serve me.

7. Non habitabit in medio domus meæ qui facit superbiam : qui loquitur iniqua, non direxit in conspectu oculorum meorum.

7. But he shall not dwell in my house—
Whoso acteth proudly.
Whoso speaketh impiously
Shall not come before my eyes.

8. In matutino interficiebam omnes peccatores terræ : ut disperderem de civitate Domini omnes operantes iniquitatem.

8. Even in the morning, I will destroy the sinners of the land,
Sweeping from the City of the Lord every evil-doer.

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1. *Misericordiam et judicium* ; these are the two sides of royal activity. *Judicium* means here 'right, justice.' A ruler must be gracious towards the good, but justly severe towards the wicked. It is not necessary to suppose, with some commentators, that the psalmist speaks here directly of the graciousness and justice of Yahweh : it may be said, however, that as the Anointed of the Lord, the true king of Israel would aim at reflecting in himself and his rule the distinctive features of the rule of Yahweh. Thus, indirectly, there is a reference to the divine qualities of grace and justice.

Cantabo : according to the Hebrew this should be rendered, 'I would sing,' 'Let me sing.' *Psallam*=I would sing songs to music.

2. *Intelligam in via immaculata* ; the sense is, 'I would meditate (or, think well) on a Perfect Way.' The verses which follow contain the psalmist's reflection on the Perfect Way. The Perfect Way is the ideal of conduct. The King is determined to take perfection as his standard. It has been suggested, in view of Ps. xlvi. 7, that the Hebrew verb here rendered *intelligam 'askilah*, may mean, 'I would sing wisely,' or, 'I would sing a *maskil*.' If this rendering were possible, we should have to consider the verses that follow as a *Maskil* dealing with the duties of a King.

Quando venies ad me : the Hebrew shows that the sense is not, 'When Thou comest to me' (as if the thought were, I would meditate on the Perfect Way, if Thou wert present to help me), but, 'When wilt Thou come to me ?' The King expresses his longing for the coming of the Lord—for the sense of the presence of Yahweh. Theodoret explains : 'I long for Thy coming (*parousia*), I crave for Thy appearance ; grant Thou my desire !' *Cf.* Is. lviii. 2.

Perambulabam : the imperfects are to be regarded as implying

continuous action in the future. Grammatically, of course, it would be possible to take the different imperfects here as stating either what is actually going on in the present, or what was customary in the past.

Innocentia cordis mei : with single-minded probity.

In medio domus meae : in my private life.

3. *Rem injustam* : Hebrew *d^ebhar b^eliya'al,* which Jerome renders, *verbum Belial* (*i.e.*, a disgraceful thing). He will not consider, even for a moment, anything which is evil.

Facientes praevaricationes ; the Hebrew has, ' the doing of evil ' : the Greeks read *'oseh,* ' doer,' where the Massoretes read *'^asoh,* ' doing.'

Cor pravum : not referring to his own heart, but to the hearts of his associates.

Declinantem, etc. ; the Hebrew text is differently arranged here. Jerome renders :

Facientem declinationes odivi,
Nec adhaesit mihi :
Cor pravum recedit a me ;
Malum nesciam.

The Vulgate follows the Greek in fusing together two separate clauses into *Declinantem a me malignum non cognoscebam,* but the Greek has here the genitive absolute, ' When the impious turns aside from me, I know (him) not.'

Detrahentem : the slanderer. The *hunc* and *cum hoc* of this verse, and the *hic* of the next verse are Hebraisms ; they are pleonastic in Latin.

Superbus oculus=the proud man. *Insatiabile cor*=the covetous man. Jerome renders :

Superbum oculis et altum corde
Cum hoc esse non potero.

Edebam : the Greek translators read here, *lo' 'okhel,* ' I will not eat : ' the Massoretic text has, *lo' 'ukhal,* ' I cannot ' (' endure,' or something similar being understood).

Cum hoc represents a Hebrew *'itto* ; the Massoretes have *'otho,* ' him.' Eating with a man implies familiarity, and if we retain the Vulgate reading we must explain *non edebam* as=' I will hold no friendship with.'

6. His eyes will be on the watch to discover the loyal ones (*i.e.*, the God-fearing) in the land, so that he may bring them to live with him. The citizen who walks on the Perfect Way shall come into the royal house to serve upon (*ministrare*) the king.

7. *Superbiam* : the Hebrew has ' deceit,' *r^emiyah* : probably the Greeks read *ramah,* ' the high,' or ' proud.'

Non direxit : ' will not abide,' ' will not prosper.' The Hebrew is *lo' yikkon,* ' will not stand firm.'

In matutino interficiebam: the sense is obviously not that the king will each morning, or any morning, order a universal slaughter of the wicked. The psalmist states merely with poetical hyperbole that he will be ever zealous to remove the wicked from the land. The royal courts will be held with unfailing regularity, the royal zeal for justice being symbolised by the hour at which the king begins his work as judge and ruler. Theodoret, who regards the psalm as a Davidic prophecy of the reign of King Josias, explains the morning as the beginning of the reign of Josias. *Cf.* 4 Kings xxii. 23 ; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 35.

Civitas Dei: Jerusalem would have a genuine claim to this title after the transference of the Ark to Sion.

PSALM CI

COMFORT IN EXILE

THIS psalm is a prayer of exiled Israel for the restoration of Sion. The psalmist speaks in the name of the people. He prays that Yahweh may hear the cry for help of the exiled people. The nation is threatened with extinction. Israel is like a man whose flesh has been wasted through illness, whose bones cleave to his skin, and whose desire for food has vanished. It is constant weeping over her lot that has thus weakened and wasted Israel. She has become like a lonely bird that lives amid ruins, and complains in the night time on house-tops. Her enemies mock her, and her former friends weave her name into their curses. God's anger weighs so sorely that her bread is like ashes, and salt tears are her drink. Her days are as the lengthening shadow which betokens the nearness of night: the close of her day seems to be at hand.

But Yahweh, the eternal God and the Lord of the Covenant, cannot permit that His people should perish. He will surely arise again in His might and re-establish Sion and terrify the heathen by His great deeds. If the ordinary Israelite loves the very stones and the dust of Jerusalem, the God whose dwelling is Sion, cannot forget His love for the Holy City.

Full of confidence in the coming of rescue from God, the psalmist directs that a record be made of the deeds of God's love and mercy which are about to take place, so that generations yet unborn may give thanks to Yahweh for the restoration of Sion.

He prays that Israel may not be snatched away untimely in the prime of her life, before she has seen the fulfilment of God's promises. Yahweh, unlike His creatures, is unchangeable, and hence His promises must be fulfilled. It follows, therefore, that Israel will be rescued, and that she will be established again before the face of the Lord until all the promises have been accomplished. Thus the psalmist, through reflection on the eternity and unchangeableness of the Lord, passes from deep dejection into confident hope.

This psalm is the fifth of the Penitential Psalms.

It was obviously composed while Jerusalem still lay in ruins, but there is no good reason for supposing with some modern critics that the ruined condition of Jerusalem referred to is that of the Maccabean period (1 Macc. i. 33; x. 10). It is much simpler and more natural to take the psalm as a prayer of the exiled community in Babylon. It will be noted that this psalm contains many echoes of other psalms,

of Lamentations, of Job, and of the second part of Isaias. The apparent contrast between verses 13–23 and the rest of the psalm has led some critics to see in the psalm a combination of two poems which were originally distinct, a purely personal Lamentation, and a poem dealing with the End-period, the Messianic age (vv. 13–23). Even a conservative Catholic scholar like Hoberg regards verses 14–23 as an interpolation inserted in a psalm which was complete without them. Verse 13, however, Hoberg assigns to the original poem. Landesdorfer, the most recent Catholic commentator, has no hesitation in accepting the critical theory that the psalm is a combination of two originally distinct poems, an individual Lamentation, verses 1–12, 24–28, and a later eschatological and national poem, verses 13–23. The national poem was inserted, Landesdorfer says, to introduce a tone of hopefulness into the deep despondency of the Lamentation. It will be seen from the brief outline of the thought-sequence of the psalm given above that the interpolated poem, if it is really an interpolation, fits easily into harmony with the rest of the psalm; it will be also noticed that the *motif* of God's unchangeableness and eternity appears in both sections of the psalm as a ground for hope and confidence on the singer's part.

1. Oratio pauperis, Cum anxius fuerit, et in conspectu Domini effuderit precem suam.

1. A prayer of one oppressed, who in his sadness pours out his complaint before the Lord.

2. Domine exaudi orationem meam: et clamor meus ad te veniat.

2. Hear Thou, O Lord, my prayer,
And let my cry come unto Thee;

3. Non avertas faciem tuam a me: in quacumque die tribulor, inclina ad me aurem tuam.
In quacumque die invocavero te, velociter exaudi me.

3. Turn not Thy face from me,
In the day of my grief bend to me Thine ear;
On the day when I cry unto Thee,
Do Thou quickly give ear to me!

4. Quia defecerunt sicut fumus dies mei: et ossa mea sicut cremium aruerunt.
5. Percussus sum ut fœnum, et aruit cor meum: quia oblitus sum comedere panem meum.
6. A voce gemitus mei adhæsit os meum carni meæ.
7. Similis factus sum pellicano solitudinis: factus sum sicut nycticorax in domicilio.
8. Vigilavi, et factus sum sicut passer solitarius in tecto.

4. My days fade away like smoke;
And my bones are dried up like firewood.
5. I am "burned up" like grass, and dried up is my heart,
For I have forgotten to eat my bread.
6. By reason of my loud groaning
My bones cleave to my flesh.
7. I am like the pelican of the desert;
I am become like an owl in (its) dwelling;
8. I watch and am become like the bird
That is lonely on the house top.

9. Tota die exprobrabant mihi inimici mei: et qui laudabant me, adversum me jurabant.

9. All the day long my enemies mock me,
And they who once praised me make me their curse:

10. Quia cinerem tamquam panem manducabam, et potum meum cum fletu miscebam.
11. A facie iræ et indignationis tuæ: qui elevans allisisti me.
12. Dies mei sicut umbra declinaverunt: et ego sicut fœnum arui.

10. For I eat ashes like bread,
And mingle my drink with tears,

11. Because of Thy fierce wrath,
Thou raisest me up and castest me down.
12. My days are as a lengthening shadow,
And I—like the grass I am withered.

13. Tu autem Domine in æternum permanes: et memoriale tuum in generationem et generationem.
14. Tu exsurgens misereberis Sion: quia tempus miserendi ejus, quia venit tempus.
15. Quoniam placuerunt servis tuis lapides ejus: et terræ ejus miserebuntur.
16. Et timebunt Gentes nomen tuum Domine, et omnes reges terræ gloriam tuam.

13. But Thou, O Lord, abidest for ever,
And the memory of Thee is from age to age.

14. Thou wilt arise and have pity on Sion,
For 'tis time to show her mercy:
The Season hath come.
15. For Thy servants love even her stones,
And feel pity for the very dust of her.

16. And the nations shall fear Thy name, O Lord,
And all the kings of the earth Thy glory.

17. Quia ædificavit Dominus Sion: et videbitur in gloria sua.
18. Respexit in orationem humilium: et non sprevit precem eorum.
19. Scribantur hæc in generatione altera: et populus, qui creabitur, laudabit Dominum:

17. For the Lord hath built up Sion,
And hath shown Himself in His glory
18. He hath turned to the prayer of the lowly,
And hath not despised their pleading.
19. Let these things be written for a future age;
A race still to be fashioned shall praise the Lord.

20. Quia prospexit de excelso sancto suo: Dominus de cœlo in terram aspexit:

20. He hath looked forth from His holy height;
The Lord hath looked from heaven into earth,

21. Ut audiret gemitus compeditorum: ut solveret filios interemptorum:
22. Ut annuntient in Sion nomen Domini: et laudem ejus in Jerusalem.
23. In conveniendo populos in unum, et reges ut serviant Domino.

21. To hear the sighs of the captives,
To set free the children of death;

22. That men may proclaim the Lord's name in Sion,
And His praise in Jerusalem,
23. When the peoples gather together,
And the kings to worship the Lord;

24. Respondit ei in via virtutis suæ: Paucitatem dierum meorum nuntia mihi.
25. Ne revoces me in dimidio dierum meorum: in generationem et generationem anni tui.
26. Initio tu Domine terram fundasti: et opera manuum tuarum sunt cœli.
27. Ipsi peribunt, tu autem permanes: et omnes sicut vestimentum veterascent.
Et sicut opertorium mutabis eos, et mutabuntur:

24. He hath broken my strength on the way,
He hath shortened my days.

25. I say: "Snatch me not hence at the half of my days:
From age unto age are Thy years.
26. Of old Thou didst establish the earth;
And the heavens are the work of Thy hands.
27. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure:
They shall all wear away like a garment:
Like a vesture Thou wilt change them,
And they shall pass away.

28. Tu autem idem ipse es, et anni tui non deficient.
29. Filii servorum tuorum habitabunt: et semen eorum in sæculum dirigetur.

28. But Thou art the same,
Thy years will not fail.
29. The children of Thy servants shall dwell [before Thee],
And their seed shall be established for ever."

1. *Oratio pauperis*: it is probable that this ought to be rendered, 'Prayer for one oppressed.' The *pauper* is the Israelite people in captivity.

Effundere precem: *cf.* 1 Kings i. 15, 16. The heart is full of complaint, and when this is poured out, the heart is relieved.

2. *Clamor*: rather, 'sigh,' or, 'wailing' (Hebrew).

3. *Cf.* Ps. lxviii. 18; lv. 10.

4. *Cf.* Ps. xxxvi. 20. The psalmist means that his days pass quickly, and leave no trace, just like smoke which is scattered by the wind.

Cremium: the corresponding Hebrew, *moḳedh*, means, probably, 'glow,' or 'burning.' Thus the whole phrase in Hebrew would mean: 'And my bones are burned as with a burning,' *i.e.*, the glow of fever in his limbs has made him to feel, as it were, that his bones have been dried up by fire. The Latin means that his bones have become (apparently through the fever of affliction) as dried up as fire-wood. The ultimate meaning of both Hebrew and Latin is, thus, practically the same. Jerome renders: *Et ossa mea quasi frixa* (*cf.* the Greek, φρύγιον) *contabuerunt.*

5. *Percussus*: the Hebrew here means: My heart is burned up and withered like grass. The Greeks took the Hebrew *hukkah* as being derived from *nakhah* to smite; it is really from another verb *nakhah* which means 'to burn,' or 'to cause sun-stroke.'

Et aruit is probably a marginal gloss borrowed originally from verse 12 below. The heart is the source of vital sap, and the centre of vital strength. The psalmist's heart has been burned up by the fever of suffering. This suggests the imminent break-down of his organism generally, *i.e.*, the near approach of the extinction of Israel.

Quia oblitus sum: the psalmist does not mean that his present weakness is due to his forgetfulness to eat, but only that his forgetfulness to eat is itself an indication of the peril of his condition. *Cf.* Job xxxiii. 20.

6. From much lamenting his flesh has wasted away, so that he has become merely skin and bone. *Cf.* Job xix. 20; Ps. xxi. 16; Lament. iv. 8.

7. *Pellicano solitudinis*: the bird referred to in the Hebrew cannot be identified with certainty. One expects here the name of a bird of timid nature and solitary habits. Both the Greeks and Jerome have taken the Hebrew *ḳa'ath* as=pelican: the pelican is, however, a water-bird, and not a bird of the desert.

Nycticorax in domicilio: here again the Hebrew word *kos*, is uncertain in meaning. Jerome reading *bos* renders *bubo solitudinum*. *Nycticorax* means the night-raven, or the owl. Jerome's rendering, *solitudinum*, is much closer to the Hebrew than *in domicilio*. If we retain *domicilium* we must understand it of the owl's dwelling, which is usually among ruins.

The comparison in verse 7 implies that Israel is so broken-spirited and afflicted that she seeks to avoid the faces of men, and even the very light of day.

8. *Passer*; the Hebrew, *ṣippor* means any kind of small bird, not necessarily the sparrow.

Solitarius; Agellius explains: *Ut passer qui solus in tectis versatur, omnia suspecta habens, et capi pertimescens: sic ego omnia reformidabam .....et in agris desertisque locis extra urbes versabar*. Some modern commentators regard the "lonely bird" as the owl that complains by night from house-tops. Baethgen quotes Virgil, Georgics, i. 403:

> .....*de culmine summo*
> *Nequicquam seros exercet noctua cantus.*

9. Here we have some of the causes of the psalmist's sadness.

Qui laudabant me: the Greeks read *m^e^hal^e^lai*, 'those who praise me,' *i.e.*, those who formerly praised me, or, those who pretended to praise me. The Massoretic text has *m^e^holalai* (for *m^e^hol^e^lai*), which means 'they who rage against me.' This would be suitable parallel to 'my foes.'

Adversum me jurabant: the Hebrew is simply, 'swear by me,' *i.e.*, they use the name of Israel in their imprecations in some such fashion as "May God do to thee as He did to Israel" (*cf.* Is. lxv. 15; Jer. xliv. 12; xxv. 18). The sufferings of Israel will be taken, the psalmist thinks, as a token that Yahweh has abandoned His people. The misery of Israel which the heathen will thus misinterpret is described in the following verse. The Vulgate, *adversum me jurabant*, suggests the thought of conspiracy against the psalmist.

10. Sorrow is symbolised by ashes (*cf.* Job ii. 12). For tears as Israel's daily drink, *cf.* Ps. xli. 4; lxxix. 6. The eating of ashes for bread means scarcely, as Hoberg thinks, that grief has made the psalmist's palate unable to discriminate between bread and ashes. *Potum cum fletu miscere* may mean mixing drink with tears, or mixing drink amid tears: the former is more likely here.

11. The misery of Israel is due to the anger of the Lord.

Quia allevans allisisti me: the psalmist is probably thinking here of a storm of wind which seizes up objects in its path and dashes them again to the earth (*cf.* Is. lxiv. 6; Job xxvii. 21; xxx. 22). So has he been whirled aloft and dashed headlong by the tempest of his misfortunes. But there may be present also the idea that the greatness of the psalmist's former privileges makes his present

wretchedness all the more bitter; God has raised him up, as it were, only to hurl him to his ruin: the higher the pinnacle of his former success the more utterly complete the destruction to which he is now being dashed.

12. The lengthening shadows betoken the close of the psalmist's day (*cf.* Cant. of Cant. ii. 17; Jer. vi. 4). The Hebrew would be better represented by *dies mei sicut umbra quae declinat.* The Greeks read *naṭayu, declinaverunt,* or *declinant,* instead of the Massoretic *naṭui, declinata. Cf.* 1 Chron. xxix. 15.

13. Here begins the section (13–23) which is regarded by most recent critics as a distinct poem which has been interpolated into the lamentation of the psalmist. It fits in very naturally with the preceding. While man, the object of God's wrath, is so weak and ephemeral, God is eternal.

Memoriale tuum: 'Thy name.' *Cf.* Exod. iii. 15; Lament. v. 19.

If the name of Yahweh abides for ever Israel cannot abandon hope, for Yahweh is the God of the Covenant. Hence the psalmist passes at once to the assertion of his confidence in coming rescue.

14. Once again will Yahweh arise to protect His people, and to fulfil His promises to Sion. The "time" is the time of which the prophets have spoken—the time of Israel's deliverance, the Day of Yahweh. That time must be close at hand, since Israel stands at the brink of destruction. If rescue is delayed there will be no Israel to rescue. The Latin has *tempus* in both clauses of 14*b*; the Hebrew has two words, *'eth* and *mo'edh,* which might be represented, as in Acts i. 7 by *tempus* and *momentum,* 'time' and 'season.' *Cf.* Jer. xxv. 11, 12; xxix. 11; Ps. lxxiv. 3; Dan. ix. 2.

15. *Lapides* and *terra* refer to the ruins of Jerusalem: the exiles love the very stones and dust of the Holy City, even while it lies in ruins. It cannot be that Yahweh loves His earthly dwelling less than His people love it.

16. *Cf.* Is. lix. 19. The might which Yahweh will display in the rescue and the reconstruction of Sion will make the nations fear Him, and will compel their princes to do Him homage. We have here the obviously Messianic thought that the re-establishment of Israel will lead to the conversion of the "nations."

17. The perfects in this and the following verse are prophetic perfects; the psalmist sees the intervention of the Lord completed and Israel fully restored. Sion will be rebuilt, and the ancient glories of the Temple-worship will again be seen, so that all the world may know that God's dwelling is on Sion.

18. The Lord will give ear to the "lowly" (Hebr. 'the naked'). Not wealth or power, but loyal worship will be the path-way to success.

19. The *haec* are the prophecies of verses 17 and 18. When these

prophecies have been accomplished those who behold their fulfilment will have reason to praise and thank the Lord.

In generatione altera=in generationem alteram, 'for a future race.' *Qui creabitur=*" still to be created." It is not necessary to suppose that there is any reference to the " new creation " of the Messianic time. The psalmist wishes to leave a record for future times of the great things which are about to happen in the restoration of Sion.

20. This is further description of the rescue which the psalmist confidently expects. *Cf.* Ps. xiii. 2 ; xxxii. 13.

21. Those in bondage are the exiles in Babylon. *Filii interemptorum* ought to be *filii mortis, i.e.,* those condemned to death. The Greeks seem to have misunderstood the Hebrew, *t^e^muthah* (' death '). Jerome has, *filios interitus.* If we take the Vulgate *interemptorum* as ' the slain,' we must understand the ' sons of the slain ' as children of the exiles who had been slain by the Babylonians.

23. *In conveniendo* : for the construction see Introd. p. xlv. When the Messianic rule is established the heathen peoples and their princes will come together to worship Yahweh (*cf.* Ps. xxi. 28). The Hebrew has ' kingdoms,' in the second half of the verse—not ' kings.'

24. The psalmist turns away from the brightness of the Messianic age to look again at the misery of his own condition (or, as modern critics say, the text is again the text of the original lamentation, so that this verse follows immediately on verse 12). The Latin text is here very different from the Massoretic. For an explanation of the difference see Introd. p. xlii. The Hebrew text which runs :

> He hath broken my strength on the way,
> He hath shortened my days ;

means that Yahweh has broken the strength of Israel while the nation was moving on towards the attainment of the Messianic blessings.

25. Since Israel seems to be in danger of complete destruction, and is likely, therefore, to fail in the destiny which she had hoped was hers, the psalmist prays that her life may not be cut off while she has as yet traversed but half the way to her goal. *Cf* the Canticle of Ezechias, Is. xxxviii. 10. Israel is like an individual who is about to be cut off in the flower of his age, before he has accomplished his life's task. But surely, thinks the psalmist, the promises of Yahweh will not be made void through the untimely destruction of His people ! God is omnipotent and eternal. Why, then, should He let Israel die ? See above, verses 12 and 13.

26, 27. The psalmist develops the thought of God's eternity—looking backwards in verse 26, and forward in verse 27 (*cf* Is. li. 6, 8). In verse 27 the thought is : Even though the heavens and earth pass away, God will abide. Verses 26–28 are quoted in Hebr. i. 10–12 as

applied by the Father to Christ. The idea of a new heaven is implied in verse 27—but it is not here of importance for the psalmist.

Mutabis . . . mutabuntur : *mutabis eos* rightly renders the Hebrew *taḥ^a liphem,* but *mutabuntur* does not so accurately represent *yaḥ^a lophu ; praeteribunt* or *praeterlibentur,* as Van Sante has it, would be better.

28. *Ipse es* : 'Thou art the same.' The unchangeableness of the Lord implies, ultimately, that His promises to Israel will be fulfilled.

29. The psalmist has found comfort and confidence in his meditation on the power and the unchangeableness of the Lord. Israel will not fail. She will abide as a people until her destiny as the Covenant-people of Yahweh is fulfilled.

Habitabunt : we should understand (on the basis of the second half of the verse in the Hebrew) *in conspectu tuo.* Israel will not merely continue to live ; she will enjoy the favour of Yahweh's friendship and blessing.

Dirigetur : 'will be established.' For *dirigere* see Ps. cxxxix. 12 ; vii. 10 ; xxxvi. 23 ; xxxix. 3 ; lxxxix. 17, etc. The Massoretic text omits "for ever." The whole verse runs thus in the Hebrew :

> The children of Thy servants shall abide,
> And their seed shall be established before Thee.

This is a prophecy of the permanence of Israel, as a people and of the continuance of the Covenant between Yahweh and His people. It presupposes that the present disastrous condition of Israel must cease, and that rescue and restoration must quickly come. Hence, the thought of the concluding verses is the same as that of verses 13–23.

PSALM CII

THE INFINITE MERCY OF THE LORD

THIS psalm is a hymn of praise. It may be taken, in all probability, as purely individual in origin, and not intended primarily for liturgical use. In no other portion of the Old Testament is the goodness and graciousness of God so emphasised as here: here God is hymned, not as the mighty, dread Lord of nature, or as the victorious God of battle, or the glorious King of Israel, but as the loving Father who is all pity for His wayward children.

The psalmist cries out to his soul to praise Yahweh, and to forget not even one of His favours. Then he recounts some of the more striking favours which he has received from the Lord. He has been afflicted, apparently, with an illness that had brought him to the verge of the grave. That illness he looks on as the result of his sins. But God has pardoned his sins and has restored his bodily health. In soul and body renewed, and fully conscious of the blessings he has received, he is constrained to burst forth into a song of praise to the God of compassion and love.

The God Who has rescued the psalmist from sorrow of body and soul is the ancient Saviour-God of Israel, the Helper of all who serve Him. Hence the psalmist, feeling that his own personal experience is bound up somehow with the history of his race, passes over the history of Israel in brief and swift review to show how the God of Israel has ever been long-suffering, loving, and merciful towards His people—and, in particular, towards the pious, 'those that fear Him.' Since, then, both to individuals and to the race God has been uniformly so loving and fatherly, it must be the chief occupation of each and all to give unceasing thanks to the God and Father of Israel: no worshipper of Yahweh should for a moment forget that everything which he is and has is a gift of the Father's love.

From this strain of thankful jubilation the psalmist passes on to reflect sadly on the weakness of human nature in which man's sinfulness is rooted. But there is comfort even in the thought of man's weakness, for God, our Maker, knows well what a frail structure is ours, and He is ever ready, therefore, to pardon those sins of His servants which plainly spring from their weakness. But towards those who proudly persist in their sins God is unbendingly stern. The thought of man's frailty leads the psalmist to meditate for a moment on the shortness of human life, but here again he passes on

quickly to the comforting thought of God's ever-abiding love for His own. It matters little that life is so brief if God's love is unending.

The psalmist now turns his eyes to heaven; there he beholds this loving God enthroned in His heavenly palace as King of the universe, waited on by angelic beings. Moved by the awesome splendour of his vision he cries out to earth and heaven to praise the mighty God who so graciously deals with the earth-born sons of men. His own soul he summons, too, to join in the chorus of earth and heaven, and thus returns to the point at which his poem began.

There is nothing in the text of the poem which excludes Davidic authorship. On subjective grounds, however, most modern non-Catholic critics ascribe this psalm to the Exilic period.

1. Ipsi David.

Benedic anima mea Domino: et omnia, quæ intra me sunt, nomini sancto ejus.
2. Benedic anima mea Domino: et noli oblivisci omnes retributiones ejus.
3. Qui propitiatur omnibus iniquitatibus tuis: qui sanat omnes infirmitates tuas.
4. Qui redimit de interitu vitam tuam: qui coronat te in misericordia et miserationibus.
5. Qui replet in bonis desiderium tuum: renovabitur ut aquilæ juventus tua:

6. Faciens misericordias Dominus: et judicium omnibus injuriam patientibus.
7. Notas fecit vias suas Moysi, filiis Israel voluntates suas.
8. Miserator, et misericors Dominus: longanimis, et multum misericors.
9. Non in perpetuum irascetur: neque in æternum comminabitur.
10. Non secundum peccata nostra fecit nobis: neque secundum iniquitates nostras retribuit nobis.

11. Quoniam secundum altitudinem cœli a terra: corroboravit misericordiam suam super timentes se.
12. Quantum distat ortus ab occidente: longe fecit a nobis iniquitates nostras.
13. Quomodo miseretur pater filiorum, misertus est Dominus timentibus se:

1. By David.

Praise the Lord, O my soul,
And all that is in me His holy name!

2. Praise the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not one of His favours,

3. Who pardoneth all thy transgressions,
Who healeth all thy diseases,

4. Who saveth thy life from the grave,
Who crowneth thee with grace and favour,
5. Who sateth with good things thy longing:
So that thy youth is renewed like an eagle's.

6. The Lord dealeth forth kindness
And right, to them that suffer injustice.
7. To Moses He made known His ways;
To the children of Israel His will.
8. Merciful and gracious is the Lord,
Long-suffering and gracious, indeed!

9. He remaineth not angry for ever:
Nor doth He always chide.

10. He dealeth not with us according to our sins,
Nor requiteth unto us our iniquities.

11. For, as heaven is high-raised above earth,
So 'stablisheth He His kindness over them that fear Him:

12. As far as the morning from evening,
So far casteth He from us our sins:

13. As a father hath pity on his children,
So pitieth the Lord those that fear Him:

14. Quoniam ipse cognovit figmentum nostrum.
Recordatus est quoniam pulvis sumus :
15. Homo, sicut fœnum dies ejus, tamquam flos agri sic efflorebit.
16. Quoniam spiritus pertransibit in illo, et non subsistet : et non cognoscet amplius locum suum.
17. Misericordia autem Domini ab æterno, et usque in æternum super timentes eum.
Et justitia illius in filios filiorum,
18. His qui servant testamentum ejus :
Et memores sunt mandatorum ipsius, ad faciendum ea.

14. For He knoweth well our frail structure ;
He remembereth that we are but dust.
15. Yea, man—like the grass are his days :
Like a flower of the field he bloometh :
16. But the wind sweepeth o'er it : 'tis gone :
Nor doth a man more know its place.
17. But the favour of the Lord is eternal :
(And abideth for aye o'er them that fear Him)
And His justice unto children's children,
18. For them that uphold His covenant,
And remember His commands, to do them.

19. Dominus in cœlo paravit sedem suam : et regnum ipsius omnibus dominabitur.
20. Benedicite Domino omnes Angeli ejus : potentes virtute, facientes verbum illius, ad audiendam vocem sermonum ejus.
21. Benedicite Domino omnes virtutes ejus : ministri ejus, qui facitis voluntatem ejus.
22. Benedicite Domino omnia opera ejus : in omni loco dominationis ejus, benedic anima mea Domino.

19. In heaven hath the Lord fixed His throne ;
His rule embraceth the world.
20. Praise the Lord, ye, His angels,
Ye strong ones that accomplish His word,
(When ye hear the voice of His commands).
21. Praise the Lord all ye, His hosts,
Ye His servants that do His will.
22. Praise the Lord all His works
In every place of His power.
Praise the Lord, O my soul !

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1. *Omnia quae intra me sunt* : his entire inner being—parallel to *anima mea*.

2. *Retributiones* : acts of favour. These are enumerated in verses 3–5 ; they are, forgiveness of sins, healing of bodily infirmity, preservation from death, complete restoration. The close connection of bodily disease and sin is emphasised both in the Old and New Testament.

3. *Propitiatur* : ' pardons ' (*cf.* Ps. xxiv. 11). The relative clauses here and in the following verses represent the accusative of the participle in Hebrew—governed by ' bless,' ' praise.' This participial construction, in which the attributes and actions of God are enumerated, is a well known feature of Oriental hymnody generally. A very striking instance of Hebrew participial style is the prayer of Manasses, *2f.* Egyptian hymns often consist simply of an introduction, ' Blessed is so and so,' followed by participles in which the might and glory of the god are extolled. Commentators who maintain that this psalm is primarily communal and liturgical regard the infirmities here mentioned as the sorrows of the Exile.

4. The *interitus* is the grave, or death. If the singer were to be identified with Israel, the destruction would be naturally identified with the Babylonian Exile (so Theodoret).

Coronat: grace and mercy are thought of as a splendid crown with which God adorns His loyal servants: (*cf.* Prov. iii. 3). Theodoret aptly cites here Is. lxi. 10, and lxii. 3.

Desiderium tuum: the Hebrew has *'edhyekh*, which would probably mean, as Jerome renders it, *ornamentum tuum*. Adornment might be taken as equivalent by metonymy to adorned appearance, and the *bona* might then be regarded as='comeliness'; 'He makes altogether comely thy fair appearance.' Thus the verse could be taken as a description of the psalmist's soul, or of Israel thought of as a beautiful maiden. The reading *'edhyekh* is, however, suspect, and commentators have suggested many emendations. The Greeks evidently took *'ᵃdhi* as equivalent to *kabhodh*, which sometimes has the sense of 'soul,' or 'desire.' *Cf.* Ecclus. 31, 28.

Judicium: the Hebrew has the plural, *mishpaṭim*='fair verdicts,' 'justice.' *Miserationes* represents *ṣᵉdhaḳoth*, 'deeds of justice.'

7. God's dealings with Moses are a specimen of divine graciousness. (*cf.* Exod. xxxiii. 13; xxxiv. 6). Moses besought the Lord to teach him the way on which he was to walk. The ways here spoken of are the methods of God's gracious providence towards Israel.

8. Compare Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7: 'Yahweh passed by in front of Moses, and said, Yahweh, Yahweh, a gracious and merciful God, long-suffering, and rich in favour and truth, who maintaineth favour unto thousands, and pardoneth guilt and transgression.' The words of the Lord to Moses became a sort of creed of the pious in Israel (*cf.* Ps. lxxxv. 15; cxliv. 8; Joel ii. 13; Neh. ix. 17; Ecclus. ii. 11). It is interesting to note that the words in Exod. xxxiv. 6 were taken as the characteristic description of God in Islam—'Allah, the gracious and merciful.'

9. This verse is a borrowing from Is. lvii. 16 and Jer. iii. 5, 12.

10. Though the psalmist's sins had merited destruction, God has granted him pardon and a new life.

11. The infinite greatness of God's mercy is brought out by the comparison. The mercy of Yahweh reaches out in immensity like the vault of heaven, over all those that fear Him. The imagery here which is taken from the light-space between earth and heaven considered in its height and in its extension, is peculiarly Hebraic. *Cf.* Ps. xxxv. 6.

12. Compare Zach. v. 5–11; Mich. vii. 19. As far apart as are the sunrise and sunset has God put our sins from us.

13. Note the emphasis on the fatherly love of God. The thought of God as a loving Father was not so central in the Old Testament as it is in the New. Hence the psalmist's words here are peculiarly impressive. It has been said that this psalm generally reads like a

fragment of the New Testament transferred to the Old. Those who fear Him are the pious Israelites.

14. It is God's knowledge of men's weakness that moves Him to mildness and pity towards their shortcomings (*cf.* Ps. lxxvii. 39). He knows our *figmentum* (our nature, our constitution) because it was He who fashioned us from dust (Gen. ii. 7 ; iii. 19). God is the great Potter who knows completely the vessels He has fashioned (*cf.* Ps. cxxxviii. 13*f.*). See also Rom. ix. 20*ff.*, for another application of the thought of the Creator as a great Potter.

15. Compare Ps. lxxxv. 5*f.*; xxxviii. 5 ; ci. 12 ; Is. xl. 6*ff.*; Job xiv. 2. The frailty of man's being appears also in the shortness of his life.

16. *Spiritus* is the wind. The psalmist is thinking here, probably, of the destructive effect of the burning simoon. Like the flower which fades at the first breath of the simoon, so man is brought to naught by the least breath of adversity.

Non cognoscet : man vanishes so utterly that men do not remember the place where he has lived. *Ejus* would be better than *suum* ; the subject of *cognoscet* is indefinite, man in general. The Hebrew has : ' His place knoweth him no more.' *Cf.* Job vii. 10.

17. However frail and ephemeral man may be, God is eternal, and His mercy endures for ever. Thus the psalmist finds comfort in a hope which stretches out beyond the grave : he is conscious that God's favour will be shown even to the children of his children.

18. Compare Exod. xx. 6.

19–22. All creatures are summoned to join in praise of Yahweh, the Gracious and Merciful. This *Benedicite omnia opera* is expanded in Ps. ciii and cxlviii.

Paravit : ' established.' *Cf.* Ps. xcii. 2.

20. Compare Ephes. iii. 10 ; vi. 12. *Virtute,* ' strength ' ; *vocem,* ' sound.'

21. *Virtutes* : the hosts of the Lord in general ; Hebrew, *ṣᵉbha'au, exercitus ejus.* The ' hosts ' include, probably, the Angels, the stars, and all the great powers of nature, such as storm, fire, etc.

PSALM CIII

A HYMN IN PRAISE OF CREATION

PSALM ciii is a companion and counterpart to the preceding psalm. Psalm cii celebrates the providence of Yahweh towards man: the present psalm glorifies the greatness of God in nature. The thought of the psalm follows in general the course of the Creation-narrative in Genesis i.

The psalmist begins with a summons to his soul to praise the Lord, and with a cry of joy at the greatness of Yahweh. The poem then develops in detail the aspects of God's greatness which appear in Creation. As the narrative in Genesis i begins with the creation of the heavens, above which God has His dwelling, so also does this psalm. As a great king robes himself in splendid raiment, Yahweh has robed Himself with light. In the great fabric of the universe He has taken the 'upper storey,' the place above the waters of heaven, for His abode: the foundations of His dwelling are in the upper waters. The vault of heaven He has stretched out as a mighty tent-roof. The clouds which sweep across the skies are God's chariot, and they are borne along on the pinions of the storm-winds. Before the chariot of God the winds speed as His heralds, and the flashing lightnings are the servants that accompany Him.

The third day of creation is treated at great length. The psalmist first celebrates the separation of water and land. The earth was founded on pillars unshakable, but it was enveloped in waters as with a garment. With His thunder—His threatening voice, the Lord terrified the waters, so that they fled from before Him into the ocean-hollows, and the dry land with its hills and valleys stood forth. For the Deep, in which the earth had been sunk, the Lord set a limit which it may nevermore pass.

In a further section the psalmist sings the work of the second half of the third day. Though the Deep has receded to its oceans, land and water are not completely estranged. In the valleys there are springs for the use of living creatures that live there. On the hills and highland plateaus the rains come down from the heavens to keep fresh the trees, and to water the pastures. The earth, thus cared for and watered by Yahweh, is fruitful for beasts and for men, producing rich herbage and abundance of wine, oil, and grain. While the domestic animals and men dwell chiefly in the lowlands, the rocky hills are the home of the wild beasts and birds.

Then the poet passes on to the fourth day of Creation, and chants

the creation of the heavenly bodies. Chief among these are the moon and sun. The moon determines divisions and festivals of the year; the sun rules the life of day and night. The night belongs to the wild beasts; in the darkness they come forth from their dens in the forest, and with growls demand from the Lord their sustenance. But day belongs to men. The beasts of prey shrink back to their lairs at the sun-rise, but man goes then forth to his work.

The poem then passes on to the work of the fifth day, the creation of living beings. Full of admiration the psalmist surveys the immense multitude of creatures that dwell on land and in the seas, and glorifies God's care for them all. For each single one of His creatures God makes provision: for each one of them He opens His hand, and each of them eats therefrom. He provides, not merely for their conservation, but also for the renewal of their kinds.

In a double Epilogue (31–34) the poet prays that God may take delight in His works, as man, when he beholds them, is compelled to rejoice in them. He himself will sing the praises of the Lord as long as he lives. He prays that the song which he has here composed on Creation may be pleasing to the Lord.

In the concluding verse (which may be a liturgical addition) he prays for the destruction of the sole discordant element in nature—the wicked, and summons his soul (as in verse 1) to the praise of the Lord.

It is to be noted as important for critical purposes, that this psalm agrees with Gen. i in placing the creation of the heavenly bodies after the separation of land and sea and the creation of plant-life. Though the psalmist seems to work almost exclusively with the material of Gen. i, he uses that material with considerable freedom, thus helping modern students of Genesis to discriminate in reasonable fashion between the content and the form of Gen. i. The similarity of theme and style between Ps. cii and ciii leads naturally to the ascription of both psalms to the same author. There is no information as to authorship in the Massoretic text of Ps. 103, but the Vulgate assigns the psalm to David.

Every student of Egyptology must be struck by the resemblances between the Hymn to Aton found at El Amarna which has been usually assigned to King Akhnaton, and this psalm. Though the resemblances are very curious in some respects, they are not such as to establish a dependence of the psalm on the Hymn of Akhnaton. It must be remembered that Akhnaton's hymn is a glorification of the sun as the sole god, the creator of the world and the source of life for all that is. For the psalmist, however, the universe is the creation of Yahweh, and the sun and moon are merely objects, though, of course, important objects, in that creation. The reference to the Livyathan (verse 26), to the Deep, to the cloud-chariot and the storm-steeds of Yahweh, and other features of the psalm have often been

explained as echoes of ancient non-Hebrew creation stories, and of Oriental myths. It is difficult, however, to distinguish in the psalm between what is due to the psalmist's own imagination working on the narrative in Gen. i and elements derived from outside sources which may have been current as a sort of literary stock-in-trade in the psalmist's age. The attitude of the psalmist is as precisely monotheistic as is that of the author of Gen. i.

1. Ipsi David.

Benedic anima mea Domino : Domine Deus meus magnificatus es vehementer.
Confessionem, et decorem induisti :
2. Amictus lumine sicut vestimento :
Extendens cœlum sicut pellem :
3. Qui tegis aquis superiora ejus.
Qui ponis nubem ascensum tuum : qui ambulas super pennas ventorum.
4. Qui facis Angelos tuos, spiritus : et ministros tuos ignem urentem.

5. Qui fundasti terram super stabilitatem suam : non inclinabitur in sæculum sæculi.
6. Abyssus, sicut vestimentum amictus ejus : super montes stabunt aquæ.
7. Ab increpatione tua fugient : a voce tonitrui tui formidabunt.
8. Ascendunt montes : et descendunt campi in locum, quem fundasti eis.

9. Terminum posuisti, quem non transgredientur : neque convertentur operire terram.

10. Qui emittis fontes in convallibus : inter medium montium pertransibunt aquæ.
11. Potabunt omnes bestiæ agri : exspectabunt onagri in siti sua.
12. Super ea volucres cœli habitabunt : de medio petrarum dabunt voces.

1. By David.

(First and Second days of Creation.)
Bless thou the Lord, O my soul !
O Lord, my God, how mighty Thou art !
With glory and majesty Thou art robed,

2. Clothed with light as with a garment,
The heavens Thou unfoldest as a tent :

3. Their heights Thou coverest with waters :
The clouds Thou makest Thy chariots :
Thou movest on the wings of the wind.

4. Into winds Thou transformest Thy angels,
Thy ministers into flaming fire.

(Third day of Creation : first half.)
5. Thou hast fixed the earth on its bases :
It will not be shaken for ever.

6. The Deep as a garment was its covering :
Above the hills stood the waters :

7. At Thy rebuke they fell back,
At the sound of Thy thunder they fled ;

8. The mountains arose, and the valleys sank down
To the place which Thou didst fix for them.
9. A limit Thou didst set which they shall not pass :
No more shall they cover the earth.

(Third day of Creation : second half, plant-life).
10. Thou releasest the springs in the valleys :
Among the hills the waters meander :

11. They give drink to the beasts of the field ;
The wild asses thence slake their thirst.
12. Above them the birds of heaven dwell ;
From among the rocks they give forth their song.

13. Rigans montes de superioribus suis : de fructu operum tuorum satiabitur terra :

14. Producens fœnum jumentis, et herbam servituti hominum :
Ut educas panem de terra :

15. Et vinum lætificet cor hominis :
Ut exhilaret faciem in oleo : et panis cor hominis confirmet.

16. Saturabuntur ligna campi, et cedri Libani, quas plantavit.

17. Illic passeres nidificabunt.
Herodii domus dux est eorum :
18. Montes excelsi cervis : petra refugium herinaciis.

19. Fecit lunam in tempora : sol cognovit occasum suum.

20. Posuisti tenebras, et facta est nox : in ipsa pertransibunt omnes bestiæ silvæ.

21. Catuli leonum rugientes, ut rapiant, et quærant a Deo escam sibi.
22. Ortus est sol, et congregati sunt : et in cubilibus suis collocabuntur.
23. Exibit homo ad opus suum : et ad operationem suam usque ad vesperum.

24. Quam magnificata sunt opera tua Domine ! omnia in sapientia fecisti : impleta est terra possessione tua.
25. Hoc mare magnum, et spatiosum manibus : illic reptilia, quorum non est numerus.
Animalia pusilla cum magnis :
26. Illic naves pertransibunt.
Draco iste, quem formasti ad illudendum ei :
27. Omnia a te exspectant ut des illis escam in tempore.

28. Dante te illis, colligent : aperiente te manum tuam, omnia implebuntur bonitate.
29. Avertente autem te faciem, turbabuntur : auferes spiritum eorum, et deficient, et in pulverem suum revertentur.

13. From the heights of heaven He giveth the hills to drink :
The earth is sated with the fruit of Thy work :
14. Thou makest the grass to shoot forth for the cattle,
And herbage for the servitors of man,
That Thou mayest bring forth bread from the earth,
15. And wine which gladdeneth man's heart,
To make (his) face shine with oil,
And that bread may strengthen his heart ;
16. The trees of the field are sated—
The cedars of Lebanon which He hath planted :
17. It is there that the birds build their nests ;
The home of the stork is their guide :
18. The high hills are for the wild goats,
The rocks are a refuge for the hedgehogs.

(Fourth day : the heavenly bodies).
19. The moon He made to mark off the seasons ;
The sun knoweth the hour of its setting.
20. Thou spreadest the darkness, and night cometh,
Wherein creep forth all the beasts of the forest :
21. The young lions growl for their prey,
And demand from God their food :

22. The sun riseth and they shrink away,
And in their dens they crouch :

23. Man goeth forth to his work,
And to his toil till the evening.

(Fifth day : marine life.)
24. How manifold are Thy works, O Lord !
All of them in wisdom hast Thou made.
The earth is full of Thy creations :

25. Yonder sea—vast and wide-extended—
Therein are gliding things numberless,
Living things small and great.

26. Therein move about the "sea-eagles,"
The Leviathan which Thou madest to play with ;
27. To Thee all of them look,
That Thou give them their food in due time.

(God's Providence.)
28. Thou givest (it) to them ; they gather it ;
When Thou openest Thy hand they are filled with good things :
29. Hidest Thou Thy face, they are terrified :
Withdrawest Thou Thy breath, they expire,
And return to their dust :

30. Emittes spiritum tuum, et creabuntur: et renovabis faciem terræ.	30. Sendest Thou forth Thy breath, they are created, And Thou renewest the face of the earth.
	(Epilogue 1: Let the Lord rejoice in His work!)
31. Sit gloria Domini in sæculum: lætabitur Dominus in operibus suis:	31. Eternal glory to the Lord. Let the Lord rejoice in His works.
32. Qui respicit terram, et facit eam tremere: qui tangit montes, et fumigant.	32. When He gazeth on the earth it trembleth: When He toucheth the mountains they smoke.
	(Epilogue 2: the psalmist will rejoice in the Lord.)
33. Cantabo Domino in vita meo: psallam Deo meo, quamdiu sum.	33. I will sing to the Lord all my life; I will chant to my God while I live.
34. Jucundum sit ei eloquium meum: ego vero delectabor in Domino.	34. May this song of mine give Him pleasure! Verily I will rejoice in the Lord.
35. Deficiant peccatores a terra, et iniqui ita ut non sint: benedic anima mea Domino.	35. May the wicked cease from the earth, And evildoers be no more! Bless the Lord thou, my soul!

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1. *Magnificatus*: 'great.'

Confessio, 'praise'; *decor* has almost the same meaning; (*cf.* Ps. xcv. 6). The 'praise' is that which the self-manifestation of God in creation—particularly in the heavens—demands. In the Hebrew the thought seems to be conveyed that creation is a sort of glorious vesture of God—just as light, in the following verse, is declared to be the raiment of God.

2. *Amictus lumine* (*cf.* 1 Tim. vi. 16). As earthly kings appear in royal state, clad in splendid garments, so does the King of kings appear arrayed in the dazzling robe of the radiant, many-coloured, sky.

Extendens . . . pellem: (*cf.* Is. xl. 22). The dome of heaven is here thought of, in Bedouin fashion, as the roof of a tent. *Cf.* Ps. xviii. 6.

3. Here the world is represented, not as the nomad, but as the house-dwelling peasant thinks it. It is a great two-storied building, or a building the roof of which serves as a sort of upper storey: on the ground-floor—the earth, men dwell, but the upper-storey, heaven, is the dwelling of God. The *superiora*=the upper storey. The firmament was made, according to Genesis i, to divide between the upper waters and the lower. The upper waters supply the rains which fall on the earth; it is of these upper waters that verse 3 speaks. The Hebrew has: 'Who fixes the beams of His upper storey in the waters'; this seems to imply that the dwelling of God is a palace supported, like a lake-dwelling, above the upper waters by great

beams resting somehow on the waters. Thus, just as the firm earth is regarded as based on the waters of the Deep (Ps. xxiii. 2), so the home of God was imagined as established on the upper waters. *Cf.* Job xxxviii. 6 ; xxvi. 7.

Ascensum : 'chariot.' The clouds are the chariot of God, and the winds are the winged steeds of the chariot (*cf.* Zach. vi. 1*ff.*). For the chariot of God compare Ezech. i. Compare the chariot of the Babylonian sun-god referred to in 4 Kings xxiii. 11.

4. The Hebrew text is usually rendered :

> Who maketh winds His messengers,
> And flaming fire His servants.

This would mean, in connection with the foregoing, that, as the clouds are the chariot of God and the winds the steeds of the chariot, so the winds and lightnings are His attendant servants. The winds on whose pinions the Lord's chariot is borne are the ordinary winds which sweep the clouds across the sky : the winds that accompany the flaming fire (=lightnings) are obviously storm-winds. For the imagery generally compare Ps. xvii. The Greek translators took 'messengers' (angels) and 'servants' as the nearer, and 'winds' and 'flaming fire' as the remote objects ; they, therefore, took the verse to mean :

> Who transformest into winds Thy angels,
> And Thy ministrants into flaming fire.

With that interpretation agrees the Targum rendering : 'Who maketh His messengers swift like the winds and His ministrants powerful like flaming fire.' Some commentators take the Greek (=Vulgate) to be almost exactly equivalent to the Hebrew as usually understood :

> Thou hast created messengers for Thyself—namely, the winds :
> Thou hast created servants for Thyself—namely, flaming fire.

Hebrews i. 7 gives to the passage the sense : God makes His angels into winds and flaming fire (on every interpretation 'servants' is parallel to 'angels') : He makes them, that is, as completely subject to His will as if they were ordinary powers of nature, such as wind and fire, storm-wind and lightning.

5. Here begins the description of the work of the third day of creation. *Stabilitas* : foundation, firm basis. The structure of the earth is the most solid of all things : hence it must rest on mighty foundations. But, as no eye has seen these foundations, the firmness of the earth was an object of wonder to the Hebrew mind. *Cf.* Job xxxviii. 6.

6. Here is suggested the condition of earth as it is described in Gen. i. 2, 9. The Abyss once covered the earth like a garment so

that no portion of dry land could be seen. Even the hills were covered.

7. As a warrior rushes to battle, raising his war-cry, so Yahweh advanced against the Deep with threatening cry. At the sound of His thundering voice the terrified Deep fled away. For the Hebrews thunder was the 'voice of God.' In the Babylonian Epic of Marduk there is described a great struggle between Marduk and Tiamat (=the Deep) the imagery of which may possibly have been in the mind of the poet who composed these verses.

8. As the waters of the Deep retreated, the dry land appeared—the hills seeming to rise up and the valleys to sink down. The phrase *in locum quem fundasti eis* is to be explained, probably, as the 'one place' of Gen. i. 9. Hence the 'place' in question is the place of the waters, and not of the mountains and valleys, and we must read *Ascendunt . . . campi* as a parenthesis.

9. To the Deep, which had fled at the chiding of Yahweh, a barrier was set by the Almighty which it might nevermore pass to overwhelm the earth. *Cf.* Job xxxviii. 10*f.* :

> "When I imposed on him (the Deep) a decree,
> And fixed a bar and doors:
> Thus far thou mayest come, but no farther;
> And here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

The imagery of the psalmist, as well as of the author of Job, may have been influenced by earlier Oriental poetry.

10. Here begins the story of the distribution of land and water. Even though the waters of the Deep had withdrawn, it was necessary that the surface of the earth should be supplied with water for the support of plant-life and animal-life. The poet speaks first of rivers and brooks, and then of the rain. Both were originally portions of the Deep which once enveloped the world.

For the brooks in the valleys, compare Deut. viii. 7. The plentiful provision of water was a matter of immense importance for the Easterner; hence the peculiar emphasis on the blessings of an abundant water-supply in this section of the poem.

The streams find their way through the hills, bringing comfort to the wild beasts for which God has taken such careful thought. As a specimen of the wild beasts thus provided for, the psalmist mentions the wildest and least partial to man—the wild ass. Far away in the solitude of the steppes God provides for the least tameable of wild beings.

The wild asses are represented in the Greek (and Latin) as looking confidently (*expectabunt*) to God for their sustenance. The Hebrew has: 'The wild asses slake their thirst.' Where the Massoretes read, *yishb^{e}ru*, 'they break,' 'they quench,' the Greeks read an Aramaic verb, *y^{e}sabb^{e}ru*, 'they hope for.' 'Thirst' ought to be the object of the verb, but the Greeks, misled by their false reading,

y^e^sabb^e^ru, rendered, προσδέξονται ὄναγροι εἰς δίψαν αὐτῶν: they took the verse to mean that the wild asses trust to the springs (or, to the Lord) 'in reference to their thirst'—hoping that the thirst will be extinguished. The Latin, as often, replaces the Greek accusative by the ablative, *in siti sua*. Jerome renders: *et reficiat onager sitim suam.*

12. *Super ea*: in the context this ought to mean, by the springs and the streams—not, of course, that the birds were perched on the backs of the wild asses. Beside the springs and brooks the trees would abound, and in the trees would be the home of the birds. But the Latin (Greek) has 'from among the rocks'—not 'from among the trees.' In the Hebrew we have, 'from the midst of the foliage,' which Jerome renders, *de medio nemorum.* It is clear that the Greek translators read in their Hebrew text *kephim*, 'rocks' where the Massoretes have *'^a^pha'im*, 'foliage.' The picture implied in the verse is that of groves beside the water-courses, from the midst of which the voices of the song-birds are heard. The peculiar abruptness of *super ea*, without any definite antecedent, suggests that the text may be here somewhat displaced. Hence it has been proposed to read verses 16, 17 between verses 11, 12. This arrangement would explain the occurrence of the reference to foliage in verse 12—the trees being mentioned in verses 16, 17. 'Upon them,' in this arrangement, would mean upon the trees. The growth of the trees is also thus made to depend immediately on the waters of the streams—which suits the context well. The whole passage verses 11, 16, 17, 12 would thus deal first with the springs and streams, then with the use of them by the most timid of desert-creatures, and then with the groves which would flourish beside them. The groves suggest the song of the birds. The scene described might well be some oasis which the psalmist had visited.

13. *De superioribus suis*: for the *superiora* see verse 3 above. The rains are sent from the home of Yahweh to water the tops of the hills and the highland plateaus, which the water of the valley-springs cannot reach.

De fructu operum eorum: the 'fruit' is the rain; the 'works' may be taken as parallel to *superiora*. Thus the meaning is that the rain is the fruit, or produce, which God has stored in the 'upper chamber' where He has His dwelling.

14. The rain quenches the thirst of the parched earth: after the rain the wealth of vegetation on which the life of men and beasts so much depends, shoots forth. In Palestine the tillage fields and pasture-lands lay largely on the hillsides, and their fruitfulness depended altogether on the rain. *Cf.* Ps. lxiv. 10–14.

Servituti ought, probably, to be taken as='service-cattle,' parallel to *jumentis*. The Hebrew text would, in this view, have to be changed from the Massoretic *'^a^bhodhath* to *'^a^bhuddath.*

Ut educas panem : as the text stands it seems to mean that Yahweh brings forth bread from the earth by supplying food to the *jumenta* and *servitus*. The Hebrew would be better rendered : 'That they may bring forth grain from the earth.'

15. *Et vinum laetificet* : the Vulgate construction here is obscure : *laetificet* (like *exhilaret* and *confirmet*) might be regarded as dependent on *ut*—which gives no good sense, or *vinum* might be taken as depending on *educas*. Perhaps it is most suitable to regard the Hebrew corresponding to *ut educas panem de terra* and *et vinum*, etc., as a gerundial construction, and to render it :

> Bringing forth grain (bread) from the earth,
> And wine which gladdeneth man's heart.

The following clause could then be similarly understood :

> Making faces to shine with oil.

The Hebrew clause corresponding to *et panis cor hominis confirmet* cannot be reasonably construed, and must, in all probability, be regarded as a gloss. Condamin [1] in order to secure a smoother Hebrew text, has proposed to remove the clauses *Et vinum laetificet cor hominis*, and *Et panis cor hominis confirmet*, as glosses. We should have then as our text :

> Bringing forth grain from the earth,
> Making faces to shine with oil.

Since, however, the clause, *Et vinum*, etc., can be actually construed, and we should naturally expect a reference here to wine as well as to grain and oil, it seems better to excise only the clause, *Et panis cor hominis confirmet*. The bread has been already mentioned. For wine as brightening and gladdening life, see Ecclus. xl. 20 ; Eccle. x. 19. Oil was used for anointing the head on festive occasions. *Cf.* Ps. xxii. 5 ; Luke vii. 46.

16. See above on verse 11, 12. Instead of 'trees of the field' the Hebrew has "trees of Yahweh," and some such expression is required as a parallel to 'the cedars of Lebanon which He hath planted.' It is possible that the Greek translators had in their Hebrew text *Shaddai* (the ancient designation of God), and that they read it as *sadeh*=plain, or field. The 'trees of Shaddai' would form a perfect parallel to the 'cedars of Lebanon which He hath planted' (*cf.* Ps. xxxv. 7). If the suggestion here made is correct we must suppose that the Massoretes substituted here *Yahweh* for *Shaddai*.

17. The little birds make their nests in the trees by the brooks.

Herodii domus, etc., the *herodius* is the stork, and its *domus* is

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[1] See article on Ps. ciii by Condamin in the *Nouvelle Revue Theologique*, July, 1921.

its nest. As the Vulgate text stands, the meaning is that the nest of the stork leads the way for the little birds, or (following the Greek) that it dominates over the nests of the other birds by its great height. The Hebrew has simply :

The stork—its home is the cypress (or, fir-tree).

The Hebrew *b^eroshim,* ' fir-trees ' was read by the Greeks as *b^ero'sham,* ' at their head.' Jerome has : *milvo abies domus ejus.*

18. This verse, expressing God's care for His various creatures, fits but loosely into the immediate context. It may be said, however, that, since the poet has dealt with the homes of the birds in the groves of the valleys and the forests of the hills, it is natural that he should refer to God's care in providing a home for the stags and the *herinacii.* The stags roam freely on the hills ; the *herinacii* dwell in the crevices of the rocks. There is much uncertainty as to the animal referred to by the Hebrew term *shaphan* (corresponding to *herinacius*). The word is usually rendered ' rock-badger.' The Greek word χοιρογρύλλιοι means in both of its constituents, ' pig,' so that *herinacius* is most naturally translated ' hedgehog.' The common English rendering, ' conies,' seems to be connected with the reading λαγώοις also found in the Greek text.

Jerome renders verses 17, 18 :

Ibi aves nidificabunt ;
milvo abies domus ejus :
Montes excelsi cervis ;
petra refugium ericiis.

19. The great celestial bodies, the work of the Fourth Day, are now considered. As in Gen. i, so here, their chief purpose is to divide the day and night and to mark off the seasons. The moon has a greater importance for the calendar than the sun, since its phases determined the months and festivals. The great division of day and night is due to the sun.

20, 22. The night is the time when the beasts of prey move abroad : in the night the roar of the lion is heard. That roar, though it terrifies men, is on the one hand the lion's prayer for food, and, on the other, his thanks for favours received from the Lord.

22, 23. When the sun rises the wild beasts shrink away to their lairs (*congregati=ye'asephun,* ' withdraw '), and men go forth to their daily toil. Note, how for the psalmist, as for the author of the story of the Fall, man is predominantly a tiller of the field.

24. The Fifth Day comes now to be considered.

Magnificata, ' great,' ' manifold.' *Possessio,* creatures. The poet is overwhelmed at the immense multitude of living things which God has fashioned. As the psalmist has already spoken of the glories of God's creation on land, he now passes on to reflect on God's

greatness as shown in the sea. Verses 25, 26 are based on Gen. i. 20, 21.

Hoc: 'There is!'

Spatiosum manibus: literal rendering of Hebrew='wide-extended.'

Reptilia, gliding things.

26. One does not expect to find 'ships' included among the wondrous products of God's work in the oceans. Condamin proposes to read here in the Hebrew, '*ozniyoth* instead of '*°niyoth* ('ships'). '*Ozniyoth*='sea-eagles' (*cf.* Lev. xi. 13). *Draco iste*: Hebrew, '*Livyathan*' (*cf.* Gen. i. 21). The Livyathan, here regarded as the chief of the sea-monsters, was, according to the popular view, fashioned by God to be a sort of plaything, or playmate (*ad illudendum ei*) (*cf.* Job xl. 29). It is to be emphasised that Livyathan appears here simply as a great monster of the sea—not as the Chaos (=Tiamat) of the Babylonian story of Creation. *Ad illudendum ei* could also be taken as, 'to mock him'—the meaning, on that view, being that God created the Livyathan in order to show that the greatest strength of creatures was as nothing in comparison with the might of God.

27. All creatures look to God for their food. Here the poet passes from the creation of living things to their conservation.

28. God holds out His hand with food to His creatures, and eagerly they seize what He gives them. God is like a great farmer who carefully tends all the creatures that live on His farm.

29. If God withdraws His care His creatures are cast into dismay. The *spiritus* here is the breath of life of the creatures. When that is withdrawn their bodies return to the dust whence they came.

30. But when God sends forth His vivifying breath, life begins again and the face of the earth is renewed. The liturgical books read here (with the old Latin Psalteries) *emitte*.

31. The final section of the poem goes back, after the characteristic manner of Hebrew poetry, to the beginning. The purpose of the whole poem is to proclaim the praise of God. As a court-poet might wish the King perpetual memory of his name, so the psalmist here wishes the King of the universe the perpetual endurance of His glory. May Yahweh rejoice always in His creation, taking that pleasure therein which an artist takes in his masterpiece.

32. This reference to the dreadful greatness of the Lord whose mere glance makes the earth to writhe in earthquake and the touch of whose hand sets volcanoes in action, is introduced as a prelude to verse 35 (*cf.* Amos ix. 5). While God rejoices in His creation, His angry might against those who would disturb its harmony is fearful.

33. However terrible God may be towards sinners, the psalmist will rejoice in Him and praise Him his whole life long.

34. *Eloquium*: the psalmist's song (Hebrew *siaḥ*).

35. His wish for the destruction of sinners is such as we often find elsewhere in the psalms: see Ps. iii. 8; v. 2, 11; vii. 10, 17; ix. 6, 7; xvi. 13. Many of the psalms end in a short wish or prayer (*cf.* Ps. xxviii. 10; xxxii. 22; cv. 47; cxxxvii. 7, 8). It is possible that, as indicated in the translation, verse 35 (or, at all events, 35*a*) is not a portion of the original psalm, but only a liturgical addition.

PSALM CIV

GOD'S GRACIOUS GUIDANCE IN THE DAYS OF OLD

THIS psalm resembles closely Ps. lxxvii. It is partly a hymn, and partly a didactic poem. It is a review of the gracious dealings of God with Israel in the past which is intended to give hope and courage to the Israelites of the psalmist's time. The gracious and mighty God who guided the early career of Israel cannot have forgotten His specially chosen people. He will help them again, even though they are now, as the Patriarchs once were, weak and politically unimportant. Let them, therefore, thank God for His mercies to His people in the past and beg the continuance of His favour towards Israel in the present.

Verses 1–11. The psalm begins, like a hymn, with a summons to the praise of Yahweh. The great deeds of the Lord for ancient Israel are the ground of the praise. Israel should study closely the story of God's dealings with His people, so as 'to seek the face of Yahweh,' realise, that is, His presence and manifestations in the Israel of the past, whether remote or recent. Thus they will learn that Yahweh's loyalty to the Covenant has never changed, that He has been ever true to the promise which He swore to the Patriarchs.

The psalmist then goes on to prove the unfailing fidelity of the Lord to His promises by a review of the history of Israel up to the moment at which it entered into Canaan.

In verses 12–15 the wanderings of the Patriarchs in Canaan and Egypt are described, and God's jealous care for His chosen ones is emphasised. Then follows (in verses 16–25) the history of Joseph, as an introduction to the entrance of Jacob's family into Egypt. In verses 26–38 God's care for Israel, as exemplified in the Plagues of Egypt, is the psalmist's theme. In verses 39–42 the wonders of the march through the desert are recalled, and in the concluding verses, 43–45, the psalmist returns to the thoughts with which he had begun: all the great things that Yahweh has done for Israel He has done in fulfilment of the Covenant which He made with the Patriarchs. If Israel, on its part, is faithful even now to that Covenant the gracious mercies of the olden days will be renewed unto His people by the God of the Covenant.

The psalm contains no reference to authorship. Since it seems to imply a politically weak condition of Israel, the majority of modern commentators are inclined to ascribe it to the period shortly following

the return from the Babylonian Exile, when disappointment and defeat had turned the hopes of the people almost into despair. Against this dating stands the fact that verses 1–15 of this psalm appear (together with portions of Ps. xcv and cv) in 1 Chron. xvi, as a song sung at the transference of the Ark to Sion in the time of King David. There is nothing in the text of Ps. civ which would exclude a Davidic origin or dating, and it is obvious that a poem celebrating the divine guidance of Israel up to the point at which Canaan was occupied would be appropriate for the occasion of the transference of the Ark to Sion. That transference was a symbol of the taking possession of His chosen Land by Yahweh ; and a song of Israel's glory in the Exodus and on the march to Canaan would fittingly be sung at the inauguration of Yahweh's kingly rule in Palestine. Jerusalem had remained in heathen hands until the days of David, and the solemn coming of the Ark to Sion might, therefore, be regarded as the formal act by which Yahweh assumed possession of Canaan, and as the completion of the conquest of Palestine towards which Ps. civ points.

Looked at from a literary standpoint there can be no doubt that Ps. civ forms a perfectly complete poetic unity, and that it makes a much greater impression of originality than the mosaic-like poem in 1 Chron. xvi.

	Alleluia !
1. Confitemini Domino, et invocate nomen ejus : annuntiate inter Gentes opera ejus.	1. Give thanks to the Lord, and call upon His name : Proclaim amid the heathens His deeds !
2. Cantate ei, et psallite ei : narrate omnia mirabilia ejus.	2. Sing to Him, and hymn to Him ; Recount all His wonders.
3. Laudamini in nomine sancto ejus : lætetur cor quærentium Dominum.	3. Make boast of His holy name ; Let the heart of them that seek the Lord rejoice.
4. Quærite Dominum, et confirmamini : quærite faciem ejus semper.	4. Seek ye the Lord and be strengthened ; Seek ye His face evermore ;
5. Mementote mirabilium ejus, quæ fecit : prodigia ejus, et judicia oris ejus.	5. Remember His wonders which He did, His portents and the judgments of His mouth,
6. Semen Abraham, servi ejus : filii Jacob, electi ejus.	6. Ye seed of Abraham, His servants, Ye sons of Jacob, His chosen ones !
7. Ipse Dominus Deus noster : in universa terra judicia ejus.	7. He, the Lord, is our God ; Over all the earth go His judgments.
8. Memor fuit in sæculum testamenti sui : verbi, quod mandavit in mille generationes :	8. He remembereth forever His covenant, The promise which He made, unto generations a thousand,
9. Quod disposuit ad Abraham : et juramenti sui ad Isaac :	9. Which He agreed on with Abraham, And His oath unto Isaac.
10. Et statuit illud Jacob in præceptum : et Israel in testamentum æternum :	10. For Jacob He established it as a law, For Israel as a covenant eternal,
11. Dicens : tibi dabo terram Chanaan, funiculum hæreditatis vestræ.	11. When He said : " To thee I give Canaan As thy allotted possession."

12. Cum essent numero brevi, paucissimi et incolæ ejus :
13. Et pertransierunt de gente in gentem, et de regno ad populum alterum.
14. Non reliquit hominem nocere eis : et corripuit pro eis reges.
15. Nolite tangere christos meos : et in prophetis meis nolite malignari.

12. When they still were but few—
Few, and mere guests in the land.
13. They wandered from people to people,
And from kingdom to nation :
14. He permitted no man to harm them,
And kings, for their sake, He chastised.
15. 'Touch ye not my Anointed,
And do naught of evil to my prophets.'

16. Et vocavit famem super terram : et omne firmamentum panis contrivit.
17. Misit ante eos virum : in servum venumdatus est Joseph.
18. Humiliaverunt in compedibus pedes ejus, ferrum pertransiit animam ejus,
19. Donec veniret verbum ejus.
Eloquium Domini inflammavit eum :
20. Misit rex, et solvit eum ; princeps populorum, et dimisit eum.
21. Constituit eum dominum domus suæ : et principem omnis possessionis suæ :
22. Ut erudiret principes ejus sicut semetipsum : et senes ejus prudentiam doceret.

16. When He called famine into the land,
And brake every stay of bread,
17. He sent a man before them ;
Joseph was sold as a slave ;
18. They placed his feet in the stocks ;
Into chains he was cast,
19. Till his word should be fulfilled,
Till the oracle of the Lord should save him.
20. The King sent and released him,
The Ruler of the peoples, and set him free.
21. He appointed him lord over his house,
Chief steward of all his possessions,
22. That he might guide his princes as he pleased,
And teach his ancients wisdom.

23. Et intravit Israel in Ægyptum : et Jacob accola fuit in terra Cham.
24. Et auxit populum suum vehementer : et firmavit eum super inimicos ejus.
25. Convertit cor eorum ut odirent populum ejus : et dolum facerent in servos ejus.
26. Misit Moysen servum suum : Aaron, quem elegit ipsum.
27. Posuit in eis verba signorum suorum, et prodigiorum in terra Cham.
28. Misit tenebras, et obscuravit : et non exacerbavit sermones suos.
29. Convertit aquas eorum in sanguinem : et occidit pisces eorum.
30. Edidit terra eorum ranas in penetralibus regum ipsorum.
31. Dixit, et venit cœnomyia : et cinifes in omnibus finibus eorum.
32. Posuit pluvias eorum grandinem : ignem comburentem in terra ipsorum.

23. Then Israel entered into Egypt,
And Jacob became a guest in the land of Cham.
24. He made His people fruitful indeed,
And stronger far than their foes.
25. He changed their hearts :
They hated His people,
And wrought treachery on His servants.
26. Then sent He Moses His servant,
And Aaron whom He chose.
27. He accomplished among them His wonders,
And portents in the land of Cham.
28. He sent darkness and it was dark ;
But they heeded not His words.
29. He turned their waters into blood,
And slew their fish.
30. Their land swarmed with frogs,
Even in the chambers of their kings.
31. He spake and the dog-fly came,
And gnats in all their borders.
32. He sent them hail instead of rain,
Devouring fire throughout their land.

33. Et percussit vineas eorum, et ficulneas eorum : et contrivit lignum finium eorum.
34. Dixit, et venit locusta, et bruchus, cujus non erat numerus :
35. Et comedit omne fœnum in terra eorum : et comedit omnem fructum terræ eorum.
36. Et percussit omne primogenitum in terra eorum : primitias omnis laboris eorum.
37. Et eduxit eos cum argento et auro : et non erat in tribubus eorum infirmus.
38. Lætata est Ægyptus in profectione eorum : quia incubuit timor eorum super eos.
39. Expandit nubem in protectionem eorum, et ignem ut luceret eis per noctem.
40. Petierunt, et venit coturnix : et pane cœli saturavit eos.
41. Dirupit petram, et fluxerunt aquæ : abierunt in sicco flumina :
42. Quoniam memor fuit verbi sancti sui, quod habuit ad Abraham puerum suum.

33. He smote their vines and fig-trees,
And brake the trees of their land.
34. He spake and the locusts came,
And the Devourer, numberless,
35. And ate all things green in the land,
And consumed all the fruit of their land.
36. He smote every first-born in their land,
The first-fruits of their strength.
37. He led them forth with silver and gold,
And there was no weakling in their tribes.
38. Egypt rejoiced at their going,
For fear of them had fallen upon them.
39. He spread out the cloud to protect them,
And a fire to give them light in the night.
40. They besought—the quails came,
And with bread from heaven He sated them.
41. He cleft the rock, and the waters flowed,
Brooks ran through the desert.
42. For He remembered His holy word
(Which He had given to) His servant Abraham.

43. Et eduxit populum suum in exsultatione, et electos suos in lætitia.
44. Et dedit illis regiones Gentium : et labores populorum possederunt :
45. Ut custodiant justificationes ejus, et legem ejus requirant.

43. And He led forth His people 'mid gladness,
And His chosen ones amid joy.
44. He gave them the lands of the heathen ;
And the toil of the nations they seized,
45. That they might keep His decrees,
And observe His laws.

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1. *Alleluia* : in the Hebrew text the Alleluia ends the preceding psalm. Alleluia=*hal^e^lu Yah*, 'praise ye Yahweh. It appears as a superscription in the psalms civ–cvi, cx–cxviii, cxxxiv–cxxxv, cxlv–cl. In Ps. cxlvii–cl *Alleluia* appears also at the end. In the Hebrew text *Alleluia* first appears at the end of Ps. civ (verse 103). In the Massoretic text it appears, further, at the end of Ps. cv, cvi, cxiii, cxv, cxvi, cxxxv, cxlvi–cl. Apart from the four last psalms, therefore, the concluding *Hal^e^lu Yah* of the Hebrew text appears in the Vulgate, as an initial *Alleluia* transferred in each case to the following psalm. In the Vulgate psalter *Alleluia* occurs in the titles of twenty psalms, which are, for that reason, known as the *Psalmi allelujatici*. *Alleluia* both at the end, and at the beginning of psalms, is liturgical in origin.

The Jews called the psalms cxiii–cxviii of the Hebrew text the '*Hallel*,' and Ps. cxxxvi the 'Great Hallel.' In the Second Temple the *Hallel* was sung at the three great Feasts, Pasch, Pentecost, and

Tabernacles, and also at the feast of the Dedication, and occasionally at the feast of the New Moon. At the Pasch the psalms cxiii and cxiv (Heb.) were sung before the Paschal Supper, and Ps. cxv–cxviii (Heb.) were sung at the close of the Supper, when the fourth wine-cup had been filled (*cf.* Matt. xxvi. 30). The use of the cry, *Hal^e^lu Yah* passed over from the Jewish into the Christian liturgy—especially into the Christian liturgy of Eastertide.

Invocate nomen ejus : the Hebrew means : 'Cry aloud with mention of His name,' *i.e.*, proclaim that Yahweh is our God. The *opera* are the great deeds which the Lord has done for Israel.

2. *Psallere* : *cf.* Ps. vii. 18.

3. To 'seek the Lord' is the mark of the true Israelite. The people are here urged by the psalmist to live up to their designation, *Quaerentes Dominum.*

4. *Confirmamini* is an imperative. The Hebrew text has here *'uzzo*, 'his strength' : The Greeks read *'ozzu*. Jerome has : *et virtutem ejus.*

5. The *prodigia* are chiefly the wonders worked against Egypt, and the *judicia oris ejus* are the judgments of God against the Egyptians. See verses 27*ff*. below.

6. *Semen* : this is a vocative, and is to be joined with *mementote.*

7. Yahweh is the God of Israel, but His power extends also over the whole earth. Note, however, that while Yahweh is, as it were, the special possession of Israel, and His relations towards Israel are, therefore, those of grace and favour, His connection with the world generally is that of a Ruler who announces stern judgments. This thought is developed throughout the psalm.

8. The 'word' is the word of promise to the Patriarchs : it is the same as the Covenant. It cannot be changed, and hence it endures for ever.

9. *Juramenti* is dependent on *memor.*

10. The oath sworn unto Isaac was confirmed unto Jacob : see Gen. xxviii. 13*ff*.; xxxv. 9*ff*. Thus it became an eternal decree.

11. The actual words of the promise.

Funiculum haereditatis vestrae : 'the inheritance measured out to you' (*cf.* Ps. lxxvii. 54). The measuring rope is taken as=the land which is measured by it.

12. When the promise was made, the patriarchal family was small and unimportant. The psalmist wishes to emphasise the wondrous nature of a promise which guaranteed the future possession of the whole land of Canaan to an unimportant family of strangers. *Paucissimi* reproduces the Hebrew *kim^e^'at*, 'almost nothing.' *Incolae=garim, i.e.*, strangers whose stay in the land was merely tolerated. *Cf.* Gen. xxiii. 4, where Abraham calls himself a *ger* (stranger) among the Canaanite peoples.

13. The poet proceeds to show how the handful of apparently

helpless patriarchs everywhere enjoyed the peculiar protection of God. The different races and kingdoms here mentioned are the peoples of Canaan and the Egyptians.

14. The reference here is to the divine protection which Sara and Rebecca received: Gen. xii. 17; xx. 3, 8; xxvi. 11.

15. The warning of Yahweh to the kings in question (*cf.* Gen. xxvi. 11). The patriarchs are called 'prophets' because they were recipients of divine revelations. In Gen. xx. 7 God calls Abraham a 'prophet.' *Christi*='anointed.' *Cf.* Ps. ii. 2.

16. In this and the following verses God's gracious guidance of the fortunes of His people is illustrated by the history of Jacob and Joseph. God sent two famines on the land of Canaan in order to accomplish His designs in Israel's regard. The first of these compelled Abraham to visit Egypt (Gen. xii. 10–20); the second occurred while Joseph was in Egypt (Gen. xli. 53). Yahweh is spoken of elsewhere as 'summoning' famine (4 Kings viii. 1), or as 'sending' it (Amos viii. 11).

Firmamentum: the Hebrew has *matteh leḥem*, 'staff of bread.' Bread is called 'staff,' or 'support' (*firmamentum*) because it is the chief support of life. *Cf.* Ps. xiv. 16; Is. iii. 1; Ps. lxxi. 16.

17. It was by the direct design of God that Joseph was sold by his brethren, so that he might go before them into Egypt to prepare a place for them. *Eos*=the sons of Jacob. *Cf.* Gen. xlv. 5.

18. The imprisonment of Joseph is here described. The subject of *humiliaverunt*=the Egyptians. Jerome renders; *Adflixerunt in compedes pedes ejus.*

Ferrum pertransiit animam ejus: in the parallelism the sense ought to be: 'He (=his soul) was cast into fetters.' The Hebrew means literally: 'His soul entered into iron,' *i.e.*, he 'entered into' fetters. The original text does not suggest, therefore, the idea of iron entering into his soul.

19. The 'word' is Joseph's interpretation of the Pharaoh's dream; it was an oracle (*eloquium*) of Yahweh, since Joseph was inspired to explain the dream.

Inflammavit, Jerome has: *eloquium Domini probavit eum.* The Hebrew verb here used, *ṣaraph*, means to establish as pure or genuine by testing. Kimchi explains: He came before Pharaoh like silver purified, for the cup-bearer had said to the Pharaoh: 'As he interpreted to us, so hath it fallen out.' *Inflammavit* is an incorrect rendering of πυρόω which means here to test as in a furnace (Jerome's *probavit*).

20. The 'King' is the Pharaoh (Gen. xli): the *princeps populorum*, is, of course, the same.

21. Compare the narrative in Genesis.

22. *Ut erudiret*: the Hebrew has *le'sor*='binding': the Pharaoh gave Joseph authority to cast even the Egyptian princes into chains,

if he should wish to do so. The Greek translators read, apparently, *l^e^yasser*, 'to instruct,' and took the verse as meaning that Joseph was entrusted with the mission of imparting to the Egyptian princes a measure of that wisdom which was his (*sicut semetipsum*). The Hebrew means that Joseph was authorised to cast the Egyptian lords into bonds 'at his own pleasure' (*b^e^naphsho*). The *sicut semetipsum* would represent rather *k^e^naphsho* than the Massoretic *b^e^naphsho*. The Vulgate accurately reproduces the Septuagint here. Not only was Joseph to have power over the nobles of Egypt; he was also to teach wisdom to the proud scholars of Egypt, 'to make wise men of the elders.'

23. *Accola*: Israel was a sojourner (*ger*) in Egypt.

24. *Auxit . . . firmavit*: the subject is Yahweh. *Cf.* Exod. i. 7, 9, 20.

25. *Eorum*: of the Egyptians. Verses 25–38 give a brief summary of the story of the Plagues.

27. *Posuit*: the subject is Yahweh; in the Hebrew the verb is plural (*samu*), Moses and Aaron being the subjects. The reading represented in the Vulgate (*sam*) is more suitable in the context: it is Yahweh Himself, according to the psalmist, rather than His representatives, that works the wonders.

In eis, among the Egyptians. The 'words of his wonders'=His wondrous deeds. *Cf.* Ps. lxiv. 4.

28. The psalmist does not adhere to the exact sequence of the narrative in Exodus: he begins with the 9th plague (Exod. x. 22, 23).

Obscuravit: 'Yahweh made dark' (so Hebrew): Jerome, *contenebravit.*

Exacerbavit: if the subject of this verb were Yahweh, the sense would be that He did not send the plagues in a sudden outburst of anger, so as to exasperate the Egyptians, but quietly and deliberately and after sufficient warning. The Greek has here a plural verb and omits the negative, so that the Greek text gives the sense: The Egyptians embittered His words,' *i.e.*, they did not obey His words. Jerome, following a Hebrew text practically identical with the Massoretic, renders: *Et non fuerunt increduli verbis ejus.* In this rendering Moses and Aaron would be the subjects. The context, however, seems to demand the Egyptians as the subject. The Massoretic text, *w^e^lo' maru*, 'and they were not rebellious' ought, perhaps, to be emended into, *w^e^lo' sham^e^ru*, 'and they observed not.' The darkness was sent on the Egyptians because they had not fulfilled the commands of Yahweh. If the subject of *exacerbavit* is not Yahweh, *suos* must be changed into *ejus*.

29. The first plague: Exod. vii. 17, 21.

30. It is probable that 'And they went up' ought to be inserted in the text before *in penetralibus*. This is the second plague (Exod. viii. 1–13).

31. The first half of the verse recounts the fourth plague (Exod. viii. 20–32): the second half refers to the third plague (Exod. viii. 16–19). For the *cenomyia* (dog-fly) *cf.* Ps. lxxvii. 45.

32–33: the seventh plague (Exod. ix. 13–35). *Posuit*: Jerome has *dedit.*

34–35: the eighth plague (Exod. x. 1–20): *locusta* and *bruchus* are similar in meaning.

36. The tenth plague (Exod. xi. 1*ff.*; xii. 29*ff.*; *cf.* Ps. lxxvii. 51). *Primitias . . . eorum* ought to be, according to the Hebrew, *primitias omnis virtutis virilis eorum,* 'the firstlings of their manly strength.' Apparently the Greek translators understood the Hebrew *'onam* as if it were *'awen* (=toil, trouble) with the suffix of the third person plural. It is more natural, however, to take it as coming from *'on* (power, strength). The 'firstlings of manly strength'=the first-born (*cf.* Ps. lxxvii. 51). Jerome renders: *primitias universi partus eorum.* The Syriac text has simply: *rish kul yaldhon,* 'each first-born.' Some commentators find reference here rather to the precious possessions of the Egyptians generally than to their first-born children.

37*ff.* The Exodus: see Exod. xii. 31–36. *Infirmus*='a stumbler,' as in Is. v. 27.

38. *Cf.* Exod. xii. 31–33. *Timor eorum* is the Egyptians' fear of the Israelites.

39. *Cf.* Ps. lxxvii. 14; Exod. xiv. 19–20.

40. The psalmist refers to the first occasion on which the quails were sent to the Israelites in the first month after the Exodus (*cf.* Ps. lxxvii. 27). The bread from heaven=the Manna (Ps. lxxvii. 24).

41. See Ps. lxxvii. 15, 20, and compare Exod. xvii. 6; Num. xx. 11. *Abire* is used here in the sense of 'flow' (Hebrew, *halakh*).

42. The poet returns to the thought of verse 8; all the wonders which he has recalled were due to the promise made by God to Abraham. *Quod habuit* takes the place of the Hebrew preposition, *'eth,* 'unto.'

44. *Labores* renders here *'amal,* 'toil' (*i.e.,* the product of toil). *Possederunt,* took possession of (Heb. *yarash*).

45. *Justificationes ejus*: Hebrew *ḥuḳḳau,* 'His statutes,' 'His laws'=*legem ejus.* The observance of the Law was the condition of peaceful retention of Canaan. The *hal^elu Yah* which here ends the Hebrew psalm appears in the Vulgate at the beginning of the following psalm.

PSALM CV

ISRAEL'S INGRATITUDE TOWARDS THE LORD

THOUGH this psalm begins, in hymn-like fashion, with a summons to the people to praise the Lord, it abandons in verse 4 the style of a hymn and passes over into the manner of a penitential psalm. Its main theme is the ingratitude of Israel for the favours showered on it by Yahweh, and the most striking instances of that ingratitude are sadly confessed in verses 6–46. In verse 47 the psalmist prays for such renewal of God's favour as always followed the seasons of Israel's repentance in the past. The peculiar favour which the psalmist now hopes for from the Lord is the gathering together of the children of Israel from the Diaspora of the Gentiles. In verse 46 there is a clear reference to the return from the Babylonian Exile. Hence the dispersion of the Israelites spoken of in verse 47 must be regarded as belonging to the Post-Exilic period. Verses 47 and 48 are quoted by the Chronicler in 1 Chron. xvi. 35, 36, so that this psalm must be older than 330 B.C. At the time when 1 Chron. xvi. 8*ff*. was written Ps. cv must have formed the conclusion of a collection of psalms. That that collection corresponded exactly to our present Fourth Book of Psalms cannot, of course, be inferred with certainty from the presence of verse 48 of this psalm in Chronicles. It is, however, widely held that the appearance of verse 48 in 1 Chron. indicates that the existing division of the Psalter into five books was known already in the time of the Chronicler.

This psalm should be read along with Psalms lxxvii, lxxx, and civ.

Alleluia.
1. Confitemini Domino quoniam bonus: quoniam in sæculum misericordia ejus.
2. Quis loquetur potentias Domini, auditas faciet omnes laudes ejus?
3. Beati, qui custodiunt judicium, et faciunt justitiam in omni tempore.
4 Memento nostri Domine in beneplacito populi tui: visita nos in salutari tuo:
5. Ad videndum in bonitate electorum tuorum, ad lætandum

Alleluia.
1. Give praise to the Lord for He is good,
For His favour endureth forever!

2. Who can tell the great deeds of the Lord?
Who can shew forth His praise?

3. Happy are they who hold fast to justice,
And practise righteousness ever!

4. Remember us, Lord, in Thy favour towards Thy people:
Visit us with Thy help,
5. That we may see the happiness of The chosen ones,

in lætitia gentis tuæ : ut lauderis cum hæreditate tua.

That we may rejoice in the gladness of Thy people,
That Thou mayest be praised because of Thy possession.

6. Peccavimus cum patribus nostris : injuste egimus, iniquitatem fecimus.

6. We have sinned with our fathers ;
We have done injustice, wrought evil.

7. Patres nostri in Ægypto non intellexerunt mirabilia tua : non fuerunt memores multitudinis misericordiæ tuæ.
Et irritaverunt ascendentes in mare, Mare rubrum.

7. Our fathers heeded not Thy wonders in Egypt,
They remembered not the wealth of Thy favours :
They provoked Thee as they passed through the Sea—
The Red Sea.

8. Et salvavit eos propter nomen suum : ut notam faceret potentiam suam.

8. Yet He saved them because of His name,
That He might shew forth His strength.

9. Et increpuit Mare rubrum, et exsiccatum est : et deduxit eos in abyssis sicut in deserto.

9. He rebuked the Red Sea, and it dried up ;
He led them through the Deep as if it were the desert.

10. Et salvavit eos de manu odientium : et redemit eos de manu inimici.

10. He saved them from the power of their bitter foes ;
From the power of the enemy He rescued them.

11. Et operuit aqua tribulantes eos : unus ex eis non remansit.

11. The waters overwhelmed their oppressors :
Not one of them escaped.

12. Et crediderunt verbis ejus : et laudaverunt laudem ejus.

12. Then they put trust in His words,
And announced His praise.

13. Cito fecerunt, obliti sunt operum ejus : et non sustinuerunt consilium ejus.

13. But soon they forgot what He had done,
And waited not for His plan.

14. Et concupierunt concupiscentiam in deserto : et tentaverunt Deum in inaquoso.

14. Grievously they lusted in the desert,
And put God to the test in the Wilderness.

15. Et dedit eis petitionem ipsorum : et misit saturitatem in animas eorum.

15. He granted to them their desire ;
He sated the longings of their souls.

16. Et irritaverunt Moysen in castris : Aaron sanctum Domini.

16. They grew jealous of Moses in the Camp.
And of Aaron, the Holy One of God.

17. Aperta est terra, et deglutivit Dathan : et operuit super congregationem Abiron.

17. Earth opened and swallowed up Dathan
And overwhelmed the clan of Abiron ;

18. Et exarsit ignis in synagoga eorum : flamma combussit peccatores.

18. Fire fell on their assembly :
Flame consumed the impious ones.

19. Et fecerunt vitulum in Horeb : et adoraverunt sculptile.

19. They fashioned a calf in Horeb :
And worshipped a graven thing.

20. Et mutaverunt gloriam suam in similitudinem vituli comedentis fœnum.

20. They exchanged their Glory,
For the likeness of a grass-eating ox.

21. Obliti sunt Deum, qui salvavit eos, qui fecit magnalia in Ægypto,

21. They forgot the God who had rescued them,
Who had wrought great deeds in Egypt,

22. Mirabilia in terra Cham: terribilia in Mari rubro.
23. Et dixit ut disperderet eos: si non Moyses electus ejus stetisset in confractione in conspectu ejus:
Ut averteret iram ejus ne disperderet eos:

24. Et pro nihilo habuerunt terram desiderabilem:
Non crediderunt verbo ejus,
25. Et murmuraverunt in tabernaculis suis: non exaudierunt vocem Domini.
26. Et elevavit manum suam super eos: ut prosterneret eos in deserto:
27. Et ut dejiceret semen eorum in nationibus: et dispergeret eos in regionibus.

28. Et initiati sunt Beelphegor: et comederunt sacrificia mortuorum.
29. Et irritaverunt eum in adinventionibus suis: et multiplicata est in eis ruina.
30. Et stetit Phinees, et placavit: et cessavit quassatio.

31. Et reputatum est ei in justitiam, in generationem et generationem usque in sempiternum.
32. Et irritaverunt eum ad Aquas contradictionis: et vexatus est Moyses propter eos:

33. Quia exacerbaverunt spiritum ejus.
Et distinxit in labiis suis:

34. Non disperdiderunt Gentes, quas dixit Dominus illis.
35. Et commisti sunt inter Gentes, et didicerunt opera eorum:
36. Et servierunt sculptilibus eorum: et factum est illis in scandalum.
37. Et immolaverunt filios suos, et filias suas dæmoniis.
38. Et effuderunt sanguinem innocentem: sanguinem filiorum suorum et filiarum suarum, quas sacrificaverunt sculptilibus Chanaan.
Et infecta est terra in sanguinibus,
39. Et contaminata est in operibus eorum: et fornicati sunt in adinventionibus suis.

22. Wondrous things in the Land of Cham,
Dread things by the Red Sea.
23. He planned to destroy them,
Had not Moses His chosen one,
Stood forth before Him in the breach,
To turn aside His wrath from destroying them.

24. The Land of Desire they despised:
They believed not His word.

25. They murmured in their tents:
They hearkened not to the voice of the Lord.
26. He lifted up His hand against them,
To cast them headlong in the desert,

27. To humble their seed among the peoples,
And scatter them in the lands.

28. To Baal of Peor they dedicated themselves,
And ate of offerings to the dead.
29. They provoked Him by their deeds,
And evil sore befel them.

30. But Phinees stood forth and made atonement;
Then was the plague made to cease;
31. That was reckoned to him unto justice,
From age unto age for all time.

32. They provoked Him at the Waters of Strife,
And on their account Moses was punished;
33. For they had embittered his spirit,
And he spake thoughtlessly with his lips.

34. They destroyed not the gentiles,
As the Lord had commanded them.
35. They mingled with the gentiles,
And learned their works:

36. They served their idols,
And this became their undoing.

37. They sacrificed their sons,
And their daughters to demons.
38. They poured out innocent blood,
The blood of their sons and daughters,
Whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan.

39. The land was polluted by blood,
And defiled by their deeds.
They were adulterous in their doings.

40. Et iratus est furore Dominus in populum suum: et abominatus est hæreditatem suam.
41. Et tradidit eos in manus Gentium: et dominati sunt eorum qui oderunt eos.
42. Et tribulaverunt eos inimici eorum, et humiliati sunt sub manibus eorum:
43. Sæpe liberavit eos.
Ipsi autem exacerbaverunt eum in consilio suo: et humiliati sunt in iniquitatibus suis.

44. Et vidit cum tribularentur: et audivit orationem eorum.
45. Et memor fuit testamenti sui: et pœnituit eum secundum multitudinem misericordiæ suæ.
46. Et dedit eos in misericordias in conspectu omnium qui ceperant eos.

47. Salvos nos fac Domine Deus noster: et congrega nos de nationibus:
Ut confiteamur nomini sancto tuo: et gloriemur in laude tua.

48. Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel a sæculo et usque in sæculum: et dicet omnis populus: Fiat, fiat.

40. Then the wrath of the Lord burst forth against His people,
And He abhorred His possession

41. He delivered them into the hands of the heathen,
And their haters lorded it over them.
42. Their enemies oppressed them,
And they were subjected to their power

43. Often He rescued them,
But they embittered Him by their plannings,
And they were brought low by their guilt.
44. Then He looked upon their distress,
And hearkened to their prayer.

45. He was mindful of His Covenant,
And relented in His great kindness

46. He made them objects of favour
In the sight of all their captors.

47. Save us, O Lord, our God!
And gather us together from among the heathens,
That we may praise Thy name,
And boast of Thy praise.

48. Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
From eternity unto eternity.
Let all the people say:
Amen, Amen.

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2. The beginning is a liturgical introduction, or Introit, similar to what we have in Ps. cvi. 1; cxvii. 1; cxxxv. 1 (*cf.* 1 Chron. xvi. 34). For the second half of the verse as a sort of Litany-response see Ps. cxxxv.

2. The *potentiae* are the great deeds which God wrought for Israel; these, considered as the themes of songs of praise, are the *laudes*. No human tongue can duly sing the praises of God's great deeds.

3. Though none can duly sing God's praises, yet men may do God's will, and thus find true happiness. Verse 6, in strong contrast with verse 3, sadly admits that Israel has not sought its happiness in doing God's will. *Judicium* (*mishpaṭ*)=what is morally good in general, what is right: *justitia* (*ṣ^edhaḳah*)=honest endeavour to fulfil the known will of God. The man who keeps *judicium* and does *justitia* is one who knows God's will and loyally seeks to fulfil it.

4. *Nostri*: the Hebrew has 'me'—the psalmist speaking for the whole people. In the second half of the verse the Massoretic text has again the singular pronoun; all the Greek versions have the plural, as in the Vulgate.

In beneplacito populi tui : 'because of Thy goodwill towards Thy people.' Jerome has : *In repropitiatione populi tui*, as if the sense were, 'Now that Thou again showest Thyself gracious towards Thy people.'

Visita nos in salutari tuo : God has visited them long enough with defeat ; let Him now come to them as a Saviour !

5. *Videre in*='rejoice at the sight of.' If God comes again as a Helper to Israel, each Israelite will rejoice at the happiness of every other. Note here the three designations of Israel : the Chosen Ones, God's people, God's own permanent possession (*haereditas*). The special favour for which the psalmist hopes is expressed more clearly below in verse 47.

6. Note the three verbs—the use of which may be due to a liturgical confession-formula. The confession of sin here made by the community implies that the gracious intervention of God which is besought will be purely gratuitous. For the confession compare 3 Kings viii. 47. The *cum* does not mean that the present generation have sinned in, or along with, their fathers, but only that they have sinned in the same fashion as their fathers. And, as their fathers did penance from time to time and were restored to God's favour, so the psalmist looks forward to pardon and rescue for his generation.

7. *Non intellexerunt* : they did not give heed so as to realise the full meaning of God's intervention in their favour.

Ascendentes : even at the very beginning of their march towards Palestine they provoked the anger of the Lord. The Hebrew text which runs : 'They revolted on the Sea, by the Reed-Sea,' is not in order, for the repetition of 'sea' is very peculiar. The Greeks had before them apparently a text like, *'olim yam b^e^yam-suph*, whereas the Massoretic text reads, *'al-yam b^e^yam-suph*. We may suppose that the first *m* of the text read by the Septuagint translators was an incorrect addition to the primitive text, and thus we can get rid of *ascendentes*. But the Massoretic text needs also to be emended. The simplest and most reasonable emendation is that proposed by Baethgen and others : instead of *'al-yam* ('on the Sea') we should read *'elyon*, 'the Most High,' the *n* having been corrupted into *m* by indistinct recitation, through the influence of the *b* which follows. Thus emended the Hebrew text would mean :

> 'They revolted against the Most High at the Reed-Sea.'

The *Yam-Suph* ('Reed-Sea') of the Hebrew text appears in the Greek and Latin as the *Red* Sea.

9. *Cf.* Exod. xiv. 15–31. *Sicut in deserto* : the bed of the Sea was made as dry as the 'wilderness' (=pasture-lands). *Cf.* the passage in Is. lxiii. 13 : 'Who made them to traverse the Deep as on horse-back : the wilderness without stumbling.'

10. *Cf.* Luke i. 71.

11. Notice the Hebrew construction, *unus-non*, 'not even one.'

12. The reference here is to the Song of Moses, Exod. xv.

13. Though the people realised something of God's greatness and goodness at the crossing of the Sea, they quickly forgot all that had happened. *Cito fecerunt* is a sort of adverbial determination of *obliti sunt* (see Introd. p. xlv). *Non sustinuerunt consilium ejus*; they were not content to await patiently the working out of God's designs in their regard. *Cf.* Num. xi. 4. For *sustinere cf.* Ps. lxviii. 21.

14. The cognate accusative is intended to intensify the idea expressed by the verb. *Inaquosum*=the desert. *Cf.* Ps. lxxvii. 17.

15. *Cf.* Ps. lxxvii. 26, 29.

Saturitas: the Hebrew has here *razon*, which ought to mean 'wasting away,' or 'leanness'; it might be regarded as signifying in a general way, 'plague, disease.' In Num. xi. 20 it is said that the surfeit of meat on the occasion in question produced nausea (*zara'*) in the Israelites. It has been suggested that the Greek translators of our psalm, not knowing precisely the meaning of *razon* sought for the explanation of it in the *zara'* of Numbers. Yet, on the other hand, some such word as 'satiety' is perfectly in place in the parallelism of the verse, and the Greeks may have had before them a better text than the Massoretic.

In animas eorum (*b^e^naphsham*)='upon them.'

16. *Irritaverunt*: they angered by their jealousy (*cf.* Num. xvi). Aaron is called *sanctus Domini*, because as a priest he was set apart from the people and dedicated to the service of the Lord.

17. Note the absence of all reference to Core (Korah). Patristic and Jewish commentators explain the absence of Korah's name as due to the psalmist's respect for the Korachites, the descendants of Korah. The narrative in Num. xvi makes it clear that the revolt of Dathan and Abiron (Abiram) was chiefly against the authority of Moses, while that of Core (Korah) was rather against the priestly power of Aaron. Though Korah is not named in verses 16, 17, verse 18 describes the fate which befell him and his comrades. Hence it is useless to speculate, as some critics do, on the possibility of proving from these verses that the psalmist knew the Pentateuch narrative in a form which it had prior to the incorporation in it of the alleged *P* source. The psalmist was evidently familiar with the story of the double revolt as it appears in Numbers xvi.

16, 18. The *congregatio* of Abiram and the *synagoga* of Korah are respective groups of adherents of those rebels. The terms may be intended to suggest that the adherents of the rebels endeavoured to set up rival organisations to the Synagogue or Assembly of Yahweh.

19. See Exod. xxxii; Deut. ix. 8.

20. The *gloria* is Yahweh. The worship of the God who had revealed Himself so mightily and gloriously in their midst they

exchanged for the worship of an idol, representing nothing more glorious than an ordinary grass-eating ox. *Cf.* Jer. ii. 11.

23. *Dixit*: 'planned,' 'decided' (*cf.* Deut. ix. 20). The subject of the verb is God. God would have carried out His plan of exterminating Israel were it not for Moses, who came and, as it were, stood in the breach to defend the people. For the imagery of standing in the breach *cf.* Ezech. xxii. 30: 'I sought among them for one that would build up the fence, or would stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none.'

24. See Numbers xiii–xiv. When they heard the report of the spies the people would have nothing to do with the Promised Land. For the designation of Canaan as a *terra desiderabilis cf.* Jer. iii. 19; Zach. vii. 14.

26. The raising of the hand was a gesture of swearing. *Cf.* Deut. xxxii. 40.

28. The reference here is to the situation described in Num. xxv. *Beelphegor*=Baal of Mt. Peor, *i.e.*, Kemosh, the chief god of Moab.

Initiati sunt: 'dedicated themselves,' or, 'allowed themselves to be dedicated.' The word *initiari* need not be taken as implying necessarily rites of initiation into mysteries of Moabitic worship: the second half of the verse seems to show that the 'initiation' in question was simply participation in Moabitic worship. The Hebrew verb rendered here *initiari* is the same as the Hebrew verb used in Num. xxv. 3, where it is also rendered *initiari* in the Vulgate. In his own translation of the Psalter Jerome renders here: *Et consecrati sunt Beelphegor.*

Sacrificia mortuorum: 'offerings to the dead.' The heathen gods are here regarded as dead things, lifeless images (*cf.* Jer. x. 10*f.*; Ps. cxiii. 12*f.*; Wisd. xiii. 10*ff.*). By eating of meats which had been offered to Baal of Peor the Israelites could be said to have united themselves (as the Hebrew text has it) with that god.

29. *Adinventio*='deed' *Cf.* Ps. xxvii. 4.

30. For the narrative see Num. xxv. The *quassatio* of this verse is the *ruina* (=plague) of the preceding.

Placavit: Jerome's *dijudicavit*, 'exercised judgment,' renders more accurately the meaning of the Hebrew verb. The swift carrying out of judgment by Pinehas appeased the anger of the Lord. The action of Pinehas on this occasion secured for him the promise that the High Priesthood would be perpetual in his family. (Num. xxv. 12–13).

31. *Et reputatum est ei in justitiam*: this phrase is taken from Gen. xv. 6. Just as Abraham's readiness to sacrifice Isaac was an act of the highest practical perfection, so the zealous performance of Pinehas was an ideal fulfilment of duty—an observance 'of all justice.'

32. The reference is to the second miraculous production of water, Num. xx. 2–13.

Contradictionis: see Ps. lxxx. 8. The Waters of Strife=*Me M^e^ribbah*, 'the Waters of Meribah.'

Vexatus: Heb. 'It went ill with Moses because of them.' Moses had to suffer also, at least indirectly, for the sin of the people. He was excluded from the Promised Land, apparently for his lack of deliberation and want of due miracle-working faith on this occasion. He spoke angrily to the people, and he smote the rock twice (Num. xx. 9–11). *Cf.* Deut. i. 37; iii. 26.

33. The text of Num. xx. 12 seems to require that we should regard Moses and Aaron as the subjects of *exacerbaverunt*, and Moses as the subject of *distinxit*. Moses and Aaron had embittered the spirit of Yahweh by their want of loyalty. Furthermore, Moses had spoken thoughtlessly in his anger against the people. The Hebrew verb corresponding to *distinxit*, *y^e^bhatie'* means, 'he spoke heedlessly,' or, 'he spoke foolishly.' *Distinxit*, which gives no clear sense, follows the Greek. It is possible that the Greek translators were unwilling to ascribe anything like folly or thoughtlessness to Moses. Augustine thinks that the word *distinxit* is here used, because Moses, by his halting faith, 'distinguished' the miracle here referred to from the other miracles which he had performed without a trace of lack of faith or hesitation. It is possible also to take *distinxit* as having for its subject 'God.' The meaning would then be that God on some particular occasion had *clearly and definitely pronounced judgment* against the Hebrews for their failure to carry out some command which He had given to them—possibly the command referred to in the following verse. Bellarmine supports this interpretation.

34. The psalmist goes on to consider the sins committed by Israel in the Promised Land itself. The people failed to carry out God's command to exterminate the heathen Canaanite population, and thus came to be subjected to the Baalism of the Canaanites. Canaanite customs became a source of corruption and failure (a *scandalum*) for Israel, and so far did the people of God forget themselves and their faith that they actually offered their children in sacrifice to the Baals.

Here (verse 37) the psalmist speaks of the Baals as 'demons' (*shedhim*), though he had above described the Baals of Moab as 'dead things' (verse 28). The designation *shedhim* implies, at all events, that the Baals of Canaan are not genuinely divine. The worship of Moloch was associated, in particular, with the rite of human sacrifices.

39. The idolatry of the Israelites was a spiritual adultery. Israel, the bride of Yahweh, abandoned her Spouse for the Baals ('baal'= 'lord,' 'husband') of Canaan. *Cf.* Exod. xxxiv. 15–16; Lev. xvii. 7; xx. 5, 6; Ps. lxxii. 27.

41–46. A rapid review of the period of the Judges—with its

pendulum-swing from guilt to punishment, from punishment to reform, from reform to favour, from favour to relapse.

42. For *dominari* with genitive *cf.* Ps. ix. 26.

43. Even though God frequently saved them from their misfortunes, they did not turn to Him with their hearts : they continued to provoke Him with their foolish and evil plannings, and for this they had to be humbled again.

44–46. Yet, in spite of all their backslidings and sins, God never forgot His Covenant with Israel and was always ready to display towards His people His loving care and providence.

Dedit eos in misericordias. He made them objects of pity even to their captors ; they became popular among the Babylonians.

47. The psalmist prays that God may bring back to Canaan the Jews who are scattered among the heathens, that they may unite to praise His name and thank Him for His wondrous deeds.

48. This verse marks the close of the Fourth Book of Psalms.

PSALM CVI

THE THANKSGIVING OF THE RESCUED

THIS psalm, though it begins a new Book, forms the natural conclusion to the two preceding psalms. Israel appears here as reconciled with the Lord, and as safely returned from the Exile. The prayer in Ps. cv. 47 is taken as granted. The Israelites whom the Lord has brought home are called on to thank their Saviour, Yahweh, for His manifold favours, and in particular, for the graces of redemption from captivity and safe home-bringing (verses 1–3).

In four strophes, which are clearly marked off by a peculiarly constructed refrain, four perils, typical of the dangers of human life generally, and typical, in particular, of the dangers and difficulties of the Exile in Babylon and the Return from that Exile are vividly described: (*a*) 4–9, the perils of travellers lost in the desert; (*b*) 10–16, imprisonment; (*c*) 17–22, grievous illness; 23–32, the terrors of a storm at sea.

In a final strophe (33–43) the psalmist deals, in the manner of a Sapiential Writer, with the methods of God's gracious providence as seen in nature and history—especially in the history of Israel. This strophe differs so much in manner and form from the rest of the poem that it has been often treated by critics (sometimes even by Catholic critics) as a separate psalm. It can be shown, however, that in this final section of Psalm cvi also, the redemption of Israel from the captivity of Babylon is kept in view; hence this strophe, emphasising, as it does, the might by which God bends all the powers of nature to His purposes and the loving care which He exercises towards His people, forms a fitting conclusion to a poem on the peculiar dangers of the Exile and return from the Exile.

It would appear from a close study of the psalm that it was not composed immediately after the return from the Babylonian Exile, but considerably later. The psalmist has clearly in view, not merely the difficulties of the home-coming from Babylon, but also the perils of all the later home-comings of pious Jews, returning from the Diaspora to join in the celebration of the great feasts in Jerusalem.

Alleluia.	Alleluia.
1. Confitemini Domino quoniam bonus: quoniam in sæculum misericordia ejus.	1. "Praise the Lord, for He is good, For His favour endureth forever."

2. Dicant qui redempti sunt a Domino, quos redemit de manu inimici: et de regionibus congregavit eos:

3. A solis ortu, et occasu: ab aquilone, et mari.

4. Erraverunt in solitudine in inaquoso: viam civitatis habitaculi non invenerunt.

5. Esurientes, et sitientes: anima eorum in ipsis defecit.

6. Et clamaverunt ad Dominum cum tribularentur: et de necessitatibus eorum eripuit eos.

7. Et deduxit eos in viam rectam: ut irent in civitatem habitationis.

8. Confiteantur Domino misericordiæ ejus: et mirabilia ejus filiis hominum.

9. Quia satiavit animam inanem: et animam esurientem satiavit bonis.

10. Sedentes in tenebris, et umbra mortis: vinctos in mendicitate et ferro.

11. Quia exacerbaverunt eloquia Dei: et consilium Altissimi irritaverunt.

12. Et humiliatum est in laboribus cor eorum: infirmati sunt, nec fuit qui adjuvaret.

13. Et clamaverunt ad Dominum cum tribularentur: et de necessitatibus eorum liberavit eos.

14. Et eduxit eos de tenebris, et umbra mortis: et vincula eorum disrupit.

15. Confiteantur Domino misericordiæ ejus: et mirabilia ejus filiis hominum.

16. Quia contrivit portas æreas: et vectes ferreos confregit.

17. Suscepit eos de via iniquitatis eorum: propter injustitias enim suas humiliati sunt.

18. Omnem escam abominata est anima eorum: et appropinquaverunt usque ad portas mortis.

19. Et clamaverunt ad Dominum cum tribularentur: et de necessitatibus eorum liberavit eos.

2. Thus let them speak who have been saved by the Lord,
Whom He hath rescued from the power of the foe,
Whom He hath gathered from the lands,
3. From sunrise and sunset,
From the North and the Sea.

4. They strayed in the desert, the waterless waste,
The path to the peopled city they found not:
5. In hunger and thirst,
Their souls fainted within them.
6. They cried to the Lord in their grief,
And from their distress He delivered them.
7. He led them on a straight path,
That they might go to an inhabited city.
8. Let them thank the Lord for His favours,
And for His wondrous deeds towards men.
9. The longing soul He hath sated;
The hungry soul He hath filled with good things.

10. They sat in darkness and the shadow of death,
In bonds of poverty and iron;
11. Because they despised the words of God
And spurned the Most High's design.

12. Hence their heart was bowed with trouble;
They stumbled, with none to help.
13. They cried to the Lord in their grief,
And from their distress He delivered them.

14. He led them forth from darkness and the shadow of death,
And burst asunder their bonds.
15. Let them thank the Lord for His favours,
And for His wondrous deeds towards men.
16. For He hath broken gates of bronze,
And iron bolts He hath shattered.

17. They were sick from their evil ways,
They were humbled because of their sins:
18. Their soul loathed all manner of food,
They were nigh to the gates of death.

19. They cried to God in their grief,
And from their distress He delivered them.

20. Misit verbum suum, et sanavit eos: et eripuit eos de interitionibus eorum.
21. Confiteantur Domino misericordiæ ejus: et mirabilia ejus filiis hominum.
22. Et sacrificent sacrificium laudis: et annuntient opera ejus in exsultatione.

20. He sent forth His Word and healed them,
He snatched them away from destruction.
21. Let them thank the Lord for His favours,
And for His wondrous deeds towards men.
22. Let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices,
And proclaim His deeds with song.

23. Qui descendunt mare in navibus, facientes operationem in aquis multis.
24. Ipsi viderunt opera Domini, et mirabilia ejus in profundo.
25. Dixit, et stetit spiritus procellæ: et exaltati sunt fluctus ejus.
26. Ascendunt usque ad cœlos, et descendunt usque ad abyssos: anima eorum in malis tabescebat.
27. Turbati sunt, et moti sunt sicut ebrius: et omnis sapientia eorum devorata est.
28. Et clamaverunt ad Dominum cum tribularentur, et de necessitatibus eorum eduxit eos.
29. Et statuit procellam ejus in auram: et siluerunt fluctus ejus.
30. Et lætati sunt quia siluerunt: et deduxit eos in portum voluntatis eorum.
31. Confiteantur Domino misericordiæ ejus: et mirabilia ejus filiis hominum.
32. Et exaltent eum in ecclesia plebis: et in cathedra seniorum laudent eum.

23. They who traverse the sea in ships,
Who ply their trade on the high seas,
24. Have seen the works of the Lord,
And His marvels in the Deep.
25. He spake, and the storm-wind arose,
And the waves thereof were raised high.
26. They rose up to heaven;
They sank down to the depths;
Their soul fainted with trouble.
27. They reeled and staggered like a drunkard,
And all their art was confused.
28. They cried to the Lord in their grief,
And from their distress He delivered them.
29. He changed the tempest to a zephyr,
And the billows of the sea were still.
30. They rejoiced that (the waves) were still,
And He led them to their longed-for haven.
31. Let them thank the Lord for His favours,
And for His wondrous deeds towards men.
32. Let them praise Him in the Assembly,
Where the Elders sit, let them praise Him.

33. Posuit flumina in desertum: et exitus aquarum in sitim.
34. Terram fructiferam in salsuginem, a malitia inhabitantium in ea.
35. Posuit desertum in stagna aquarum: et terram sine aqua in exitus aquarum.
36. Et collocavit illic esurientes: et constituerunt civitatem habitationis.
37. Et seminaverunt agros, et plantaverunt vineas: et fecerunt fructum nativitatis.
38. Et benedixit eis, et multiplicati sunt nimis: et jumenta eorum non minoravit.

33. Rivers He turned into wilderness,
And watersprings into thirsty land;
34. Fruitful land into a salt-waste,
Because of the malice of their inhabitants.
35. He turned the wilderness into pools of water,
And waterless land into watersprings.
36. And there He housed the hungry,
And they founded there a city for dwelling.
37. They sowed fields and planted vineyards
That furnished a fruitful yield.
38. He blessed them, and they greatly increased,
And their cattle He suffered not to decrease.

39. Et pauci facti sunt: et vexati sunt a tribulatione malorum, et dolore.

40. Effusa est contemptio super principes: et errare fecit eos in invio, et non in via.

41. Et adjuvit pauperem de inopia: et posuit sicut oves familias.

42. Videbunt recti, et lætabuntur: et omnis iniquitas oppilabit os suum.

43. Quis sapiens et custodiet hæc? et intelliget misericordias Domini?

39. But when they grew less, and were harassed
Through the oppression of the wicked, and through grief,

40. "Contempt was poured out on princes,
And He made them wander in the trackless waste."

41. But the poor He helped forth from misery,
And made their families like flocks.

42. The just have seen this and rejoice,
And every malice closeth its mouth.

43. Who then is wise? He will take this to heart,
And mark well the favours of the Lord.

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1. These are the words which the *redempti* are to sing.

2. The *redempti* are, in the first instance, the returned Exiles. For the title, 'The rescued of Yahweh,' see Is. lxii. 12:

> They shall be called 'Holy people,' 'the rescued of Yahweh':
> But thou shalt be called 'desired,' not 'forgotten,' city.

While the psalm is usually interpreted as referring to the rescue of the Exiles from the danger of Exile, and of the home-coming from far-off Babylon, the various perils described in the strophes of this poem might also be regarded as typical, serious perils of life generally; thus the summons in verses 1–3 might be regarded as addressed to all who have been saved by God's mercy from great dangers, and the psalm might serve as a song of thanks for all merciful interventions of the Lord. It would serve with peculiar appropriateness for pilgrims arriving in Jerusalem from distant heathen lands for the celebration of the great festivals. In the Roman Breviary the three *Confitemini-Psalms*, civ–cvi, form the psalms of Matins on Saturday—as a song of thanksgiving for the mercies received from the Lord throughout the week.

Dicant, 'let them speak,' *i.e.*, 'Thus (in these words) let them sing.' The 'regions' are the lands of the heathens.

3. The returning Exiles are pictured as coming to Jerusalem from various directions. In Hebrew texts the 'Sea' is usually the Mediterranean Sea, *i.e.*, the West. Some commentators identify the Sea with the Red Sea, so as to find in the verse the four points of the compass. It is more likely, however, that 'From the North and the Sea' is simply a literary reminiscence of Is. xlix. 12:

> "Behold, some come from (the East);
> And behold others come from the North and the Sea
> And those from the land of the Syeneans."

For the psalmist all the home-comings of Israel, whether after the Exodus through the Sea and the desert, or after the Exile, or later

from the post-Exilic Diaspora, are all somehow included in the return from the Babylonian Exile, and all the prophetic references to the Exiles' return, and all the great texts descriptive of the Exodus are present to his mind as he sings. The attempt of Peters in his work, *The Psalms as Liturgies* (p. 405*f.*) to identify the groups of returning Hebrews who come from east, west, north, and Sea, as those returning from the Diaspora in Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, and the Aegean isles and coast-lands respectively is too elaborate. The psalmist is not speaking as expert geographer, or as a painstaking historian. The return from the Babylonian Exile suggests home-coming from all quarters where a Jewish Diaspora exists, and the psalmist, when he thinks of the Exile, sees in spirit the exiled Jews streaming into Jerusalem from every side.

4. In this strophe the perils which beset the caravan that loses its way in the desert are described. The Syrian desert lay between Babylon and Palestine, and the shortest, but most dangerous way for those who would pass from Babylon to Jerusalem lay across this desert. In Is. xl. 3 this desert-way is spoken of as divinely prepared for the march of the returning exiles :

> A Voice speaketh :
> Build ye a road in the desert, the way of Yahweh,
> Make straight in the steppe a road for our God ;
> Every mountain and hill will sink down, and every valley will rise ;
> And the rugged shall be made level, and the rough places a plain,
> And the glory of Yahweh shall be revealed,
> And all flesh shall see it together.
> For the mouth of Yahweh hath spoken it.

In solitudine in inaquoso ; viam civitatis habitaculi : as the Massoretic text stands it ought to be rendered, ' In a desert of a way,' *i.e.*, on a path which is a desert. Jerome has :

> *Erraverunt in solitudine in deserta via ;*
> *civitatem quae habitaretur non reppererunt.*

The division in the Sept. (Vulgate) text is better. *Civitas habitaculi* =a town where they might find lodging. The reference immediately is to the dangers of caravan journeys generally, not to any specific incident of the return from Babylon. But from dangers like this peril of the desert the Exiles were also saved.

5. The hopeless plight of the straying travellers is here well suggested.

7. The Lord set them on the road which led to a town where they might find lodging.

8. For their rescue they should praise and thank the Lord. The Latin ought to be : *Confiteantur Domino propter misericordias ejus.* The *redempti* are the subject of *confiteantur.*

Filiis hominum : Jerome renders more exactly : *In filios hominum.*

9. *Anima inanis* : Jerome has, *anima vacua.*

10. *Sedentes*: we must understand this strophe as referring, like the others, to some group of the *redempti a Domino*. The participle ='they who sat.'

Umbra mortis: *Cf.* Ps. xxii. 4. Verse 10 is reminiscent of Is. xlii. 7,

> 'I have set thee as a light to the heathen
> To open blind eyes,
> To lead forth captives from prison
> From the prison-house those that sit in darkness';

and of Job xxxvi. 8.

11. *Exacerbaverunt*: 'challenged,' 'set at naught.' The *eloquia* and the *consilium* are God's decrees of punishment for the disregard of His commands.

16. *Cf.* Is. xlv. 2.

17. *Suscipit*: the various texts are here in disorder. The Massoretic, *'ᵉwilim midderekh pish'am*, 'fools away from the path of their guilt,' is not very intelligible. Hence it has been proposed to read *ḥolim* (*aegrotantes*) instead of *'ᵉwilim* ('fools'), and to render, 'They who were sick because of their misdeeds.' The Latin could, however, as it stands, perhaps, be taken pregnantly as='God received them after they had turned aside from their path of guilt.' The Greek translators seem to have read *'ᵉwilim* as if it were from a Piel *'iwwel* with suffix *'iwwᵉlam* (*cf.* the title of Ps. xxi, *In susceptione matutina*).

18. Suggests the desperately dangerous nature of their illness: their soul turned with loathing from every kind of food; they had arrived like Ezechias *ad portas inferi*, at the gates of Sheol.

20. The Word of Yahweh is His command: it is here more or less hypostasised so as to appear as a sort of rescuing angel. *Cf.* Ps. civ. 19.

Interitiones: the Hebrew *mishshᵉḥithotham* rendered *de interitionibus* ought, probably, to be emended into, *mishshaḥat ḥayyatham*, 'from the pit their life.' Jerome has *Et salvavit de interitu*: by adding to this *vitam eorum* we get what was probably the original sense of the verse. The Lord sent His healing Word commanding a cure of their deadly disease, and thus saved their lives from the 'pit' (the grave). For the activity of God's Word as a healing power *cf.* Wisd. xvi. 12. For the personal character of the divine command see Ps. civ. 19; Wisd. xii. 9; ix. 1; xviii. 15. God's Word appears often as the messenger that accomplishes divine judgments: see Osee vi. 5; Jer. xxiii. 29; Ps. cxlviii. 8; cxlvii. 15; Is. lv. 11. The activity of the Word as power for curing suggests the thought of the Logos as the Divine Physician.

23. *Qui descendunt mare in navibus*: Jerome has: *Qui descendunt in mare navibus*: *cf.* Is. xlii. 10 for the phrase here rendered *qui descendunt mare*. In the Hebrew the sense seems to be, 'Who traverse the sea in ships.' *In aquis magnis* would represent the original better than *in aquis multis*.

24. The *opera* and *mirabilia* are not the wonders which exist in the sea, but the deeds of rescue wrought by the Lord for those that sail the high seas. One of the greatest wonders of the deep would be such rescue from shipwreck as is here described. The greatest wonder of seafaring is the mariner's safe return to land.

25. The Lord Himself commands the storm to rise.

Et exaltati sunt: the Hebrew has: 'and it caused to mount up'—the subject being the storm-wind, and the object the waves.

'Its waves'—the waves of the sea. Jerome renders=

Dixit, et surrexit ventus tempestatis,
Et elevavit gurgites ejus.

26. *Ascendunt . . . descendunt*: the *ipsi* of verse 24 are the subject. The sailors are swung up to heaven at one moment: in the next they sink down into the depths. From wave-crest to trough they are swept along with cruel pitching and heaving of their craft.

The phrase *anima eorum in malis tabescebat* suggests vividly the fear of impending destruction and the nausea due to the movement of the storm-tossed vessel.

27. A further description of the effects of the tempest: the mariners are dizzy and sick, and they stagger like drunken men. All their seafaring skill (*sapientia*) is forgotten—or, as the text puts it, 'is swallowed up.' For the comparison with the drunken man, see Job xii. 25. Ovid's Tristia, i. 2 is often quoted as a striking parallel to the psalmist's description of shipwreck:

Me miserum, quanti montes volvuntur aquarum
Jamjam tacturos sidera summa putes.
Quantae diducto subsidunt aequore valles!
Jamjam tacturas tartara nigra putes.
Rector in incerto est, nec quid fugiatve petatve
Invenit, ambiguis ars stupet ipsa malis.

29. The Hebrew has: 'He stilled the tempest to a whisper.'

Fluctus ejus: the Hebrew has, *gallehem*, 'their waves.' Probably the correct reading is *galle hayyam*, 'the waves of the sea.'

30. *Siluerunt*—the billows. *Cf.* Jonas i. 11; Mark iv. 39.

Portus voluntatis, 'the wished-for haven.' The Hebrew word, *maḥoz*, here rendered *portus* has the meaning 'harbour,' in late Hebrew; possibly the word ought to be rendered here 'market'—for the seafarers who have escaped shipwreck are obviously traders (verse 23).

32. The *cathedra seniorum* is the place where the elders meet. *Cf.* Ruth iv. 2.

33. *Posuit*, 'made,' 'changed.' *Cf.* Ps. xi. 6.

Exitus aquarum=place whence waters go forth, 'water-springs.' The corresponding Hebrew, *moṣa'e mayim*, may, however, mean 'water-channels,' 'canals.' This sense would suit better in the parallelism. This verse and the following emphasise the might of

God over nature. The psalmist is probably thinking here of all the great deeds of might wrought by Yahweh for Israel at the Exodus, at the entry into Palestine, and at the return from the Exile. *Cf.* Is. l. 2*f.*

Sitis=parched, or thirsty, land. The passage of the Red Sea and the crossing of the Jordan are here obviously in view.

34. A reference to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. (*Gen.* 19. 1–25).

35. The miraculous productions of water in the desert, Exod. xvii. 1–7 ; Num. xx. 2–13. *Cf.* Is. xli. 18 : *Aperiam in supinis collibus flumina et in medio camporum fontes, ponam desertum in stagna aquarum et terram inviam in rivos aquarum.*

36. The *illic* refers to the land of Canaan, as can be seen from verses 37–38 which speak of the life of the Israelites in the Land of Promise. *Civitas habitationis*=a city where they might live : see verse 4 above.

37. *Fecerunt.* The subject of *fecerunt*=*agri et vineae.* The peculiar expression *fructum nativitatis* is intended to be a literal translation of the Hebrew *p^e^ri th^e^bhu'ah.* The Latin would most naturally mean ' offspring,' but the immediate reference is certainly to the fields and vineyards and, therefore, the idea of yearly produce is more in place here. Jerome has : *Facient fruges germina* (or *genimina*). *Nativitatis* =γεννήματος, and is to be taken here concretely as=' that which grows,' *i.e.*, the yearly produce of the fields and vineyards.

39. This can be taken in a concessive sense : ' Even though they grew few, yet were fulfilled ' in their case the words of Job xii. 21, 24 :

> Who poureth contempt upon princes,
> And looseneth the belt of the strong.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Who taketh away the understanding of the chiefs of earth,
> And causeth them to wander in a pathless waste.

The ' princes ' are the enemies of Israel—the sources of her grief and trouble. Though they might be permitted to harass Israel for a season, in the end they would be made to feel the contempt of God. The Vulgate *effusa est* ought to be changed into an active verb with God as subject. Jerome renders : *Et effundet,* which is closer to the Massoretic text.

41. The *pauper* is Israel. The Lord made the families of Israel to be as numerous as the offspring of the flocks.

42. The pious (*recti*) will praise the ways of God's providence : the wicked (*iniquitas*) will be forced (at sight of the prosperity of the just) to keep silence.

42. A quotation from Osee xiv. 10. The question is equivalent to an exhortation.

PSALM CVII

A CONFIDENT PRAYER FOR VICTORY

THIS psalm is a combination of verses 8–12 of Ps. lvi with verses 6*c*–14 of Ps. lix. That it is really a combination of portions of Ps. lvi with portions of Ps. lix, and that these latter psalms are not due to a breaking up of Ps. cvii is obvious from the difference in character between the two parts of this poem, verses 2–6 and verses 7–14. It is obvious also from the fact that, while the psalms which immediately precede and follow Ps. cvii, freely use the divine name Yahweh, this psalm, like the psalms of the group to which Ps. lvi and lix belong is a so-called ''Elohim psalm.'[1] The textual differences of Ps. cvii from the verses of Ps. lvi and lix of which it consists, are very slight, and are of no practical importance for the understanding of the Vulgate text. Hence the reader is referred for a commentary on this psalm to the notes on Psalms lvi and lix in Volume I.

1. Canticum Psalmi ipsi David.	1. A Psalm by David.
2. Paratum cor meum Deus, paratum cor meum : cantabo, et psallam in gloria mea.	2. My heart is steadfast, O God ! My heart is steadfast ! I will sing and praise, With all my heart.
3. Exsurge gloria mea, exsurge psalterium, et cithara : exsurgam diluculo.	3. Arise, O my glory ![2] Arise, harp and zither ! With the dawn will I rise.
4. Confitebor tibi in populis Domine : et psallam tibi in nationibus.	4. I will praise Thee among the peoples, O Lord ; I will hymn Thee among the nations.
5. Quia magna est super cœlos misericordia tua : et usque ad nubes veritas tua :	5. For Thy Loving-kindness is great even beyond the heavens, And Thy Truth even unto the clouds !
6. Exaltare super cœlos Deus, et super omnem terram gloria tua :	6. Arise above the heavens, O God ; And over all the earth be Thy glory !

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[1] Note, however, the '*Dominus*' of verse 4 : in the corresponding text of Ps. lvi the Hebrew has '*adonai* ; here, in Ps. cvii, the Massoretic text has *Yahweh*. This is an editorial change made, subsequently to the combination of the two 'Elohim psalms into Ps. cvii.

[2] *In gloria mea* = 'with my soul,' *i.e.*, from the depths of my soul. See note on *gloria*, Ps. lvi. 9.

7. Ut liberentur dilecti tui.
Salvum fac dextera tua, et exaudi me :
8. Deus locutus est in sancto suo :
Exsultabo, et dividam Sichimam, et convallem tabernaculorum dimetiar.
9. Meus est Galaad, et meus est Manasses : et Ephraim susceptio capitis mei.
Juda rex meus :
10. Moab lebes spei meæ.
In Idumæam extendam calceamentum meum : mihi alienigenæ amici facti sunt.

11. Quis deducet me in civitatem munitam ? quis deducet me usque in Idumæam ?
12. Nonne tu Deus, qui repulisti nos, et non exibis Deus in virtutibus nostris ?

13. Da nobis auxilium de tribulatione : quia vana salus hominis.
14. In Deo faciemus virtutem : et ipse ad nihilum deducet inimicos nostros.

7. That Thy loved ones may be rescued,
Save with Thy right hand, and hear me !

8. God hath spoken in His sanctuary—
" I will gladly divide Sichem,
And measure out the Valley of Tents.

9. Mine is Gilead, and mine is Manasses ;
And Ephraim is my head's defence ;
Juda is my king.

10. Moab is the wash-basin which I desire ;
On Edom I cast my shoe ;
The Philistines have become my friends."

11. Who will lead me to the fortress-city ?
Who will lead me to Edom ?

12. Wilt Thou not, O God, Thou who hast rejected us,
Wilt Thou not march forth once again with our armies ?
13. Grant us rescue from peril,
For idle is the help of men.

14. In God we shall do mightily ;
And He will bring our enemies to naught.

PSALM CVIII

A PRAYER FOR HELP AGAINST TREACHEROUS ENEMIES

THE psalmist puts himself before us as the victim of ingratitude, treachery, and calumny, and as the object of violent imprecations on the part of enemies towards whom he had formerly been kind and affectionate. In a long section (verses 6–19) he gives us, in a manner otherwise unfamiliar in the Psalter, specimens of the imprecations which his adversaries, in their blind prejudice and hatred, had hurled against him. In verses 21–25 he describes the wretched condition to which he has come through sickness or other misfortune, and the effects of the fast which he has imposed on himself to regain the divine favour. In the final section, verses 26–31, he prays that God may show him mercy so that his enemies may realise that his misfortunes are not due to God's anger at his misdeeds, but are only part of God's merciful providence in his regard. Let the adversaries curse as they please, provided only that God grants blessing! Then the enemies will see that their curses are futile, and the shame which they have invoked on the psalmist will fall upon themselves and envelop them like a mantle. But the psalmist will proclaim before all the people that the Lord has helped him, and saved him from his foes. Instead of having to appear before God with a malignant accuser at his right hand, as his enemies have desired, the psalmist will live to feel the protecting presence of Yahweh Himself at his right hand, and he will be made secure against those that hate him.

The psalm is ascribed to David in the superscription, and there is nothing in the text of the poem which directly refutes that ascription. Modern critics, however, are not prepared to accept the Davidic authorship of the poem.

The chief difficulty of the psalm is the interpretation of verses 6–19. The more common theory regards these verses as a series of curses spoken by the psalmist against his foes, and Catholic writers have been at pains to show how such vehemence of imprecation as we find in those verses could be directly ascribed to a sacred writer. The general method of apology for these verses, understood as imprecations uttered by the psalmist, and for other similar psalm-passages is indicated in the Introduction, p. 64. It has been pointed out in connection with verses 6–19 of this psalm, in particular, that they

embody in a striking way formulae of cursing which are familiar to students of the Babylonian *Kudurru*, or Boundary-stones, and it has been suggested that the psalmist has simply made use of such imprecation-formulae by a sort of literary borrowing, and without actual bitterness of heart.

Simpler, however, than any other explanation of verses 6–19 is that recommended above and adopted in the notes which follow the translation below. The only substantial objection that might be raised against it is the difficulty of taking verses 15–17 as applicable in any sense to the psalmist. As pointed out, however, in the notes below, the psalmist represents his enemies as so deeply blinded by their hatred of himself that they have forgotten all his kindness towards them, and refuse to be influenced even by the fact that he still prays for them. It is no wonder, then, that they can misrepresent him completely, and turn all his good deeds into vices.

In favour of the theory that verses 6–19 are a long quotation it is to be noted that the imprecations throughout the entire passage are uttered against an individual, while, in the rest of the psalm a group of enemies is spoken of. The chief argument for the quotation-theory lies in verse 20. This verse certainly does not mean, " This be the reward of mine adversaries," etc., but, ' Such is the doing (or, conduct) of my adversaries '—the ' conduct ' being the utterance of the imprecations contained in verses 6–19. Verse 28 : ' Let them curse, but do Thou bless ' seems to imply the quotation-theory. Finally, it may be noted that, if verses 6–19 contained the psalmist's curses, he could scarcely make the boast in verse 4 that he still prays for his adversaries.

If, then, verses 6–19 are but the words of the psalmist's foes, this psalm presents no special problem to the apologist. The psalmist's words in verse 28 are not equivalent to a curse : they are simply a confident forecast of what will happen when the Lord shows once more His favour towards His servant.

1. In finem, Psalmus David.

2. Deus laudem meam ne tacueris : quia os peccatoris, et os dolosi super me apertum est.

3. Locuti sunt adversum me lingua dolosa, et sermonibus odii circumdederunt me : et expugnaverunt me gratis.

4. Pro eo ut me diligerent, detrahebant mihi : ego autem orabam.

5. Et posuerunt adversum me mala pro bonis : et odium pro dilectione mea.

1. For the choir-master, a Psalm of David.

2. Thou, O God whom I praise, keep not silence :
For the mouth of the sinner and the treacherous one is opened against me;

3. With false tongue they speak against me :
With words of hatred they beset me :
They contend against me without cause.

4. Instead of loving me they are my foes ;
While, all the time, I pray.

5. Evil for good they reward me,
And hatred for my love.

6. Constitue super eum peccatorem: et diabolus stet a dextris ejus.
7. Cum judicatur, exeat condemnatus: et oratio ejus fiat in peccatum.
8. Fiant dies ejus pauci: et episcopatum ejus accipiat alter.
9. Fiant filii ejus orphani: et uxor ejus vidua.
10. Nutantes transferantur filii ejus, et mendicent: et ejiciantur de habitationibus suis.
11. Scrutetur fœnerator omnem substantiam ejus: et diripiant alieni labores ejus.
12. Non sit illi adjutor: nec sit qui misereatur pupillis ejus.
13. Fiant nati ejus in interitum: in generatione una deleatur nomen ejus.
14. In memoriam redeat iniquitas patrum ejus in conspectu Domini: et peccatum matris ejus non deleatur.
15. Fiant contra Dominum semper, et dispereat de terra memoria eorum:
16. Pro eo quod non est recordatus facere misericordiam.
17. Et persecutus est hominem inopem, et mendicum, et compunctum corde mortificare.
18. Et dilexit maledictionem, et veniet ei: et noluit benedictionem, et elongabitur ab eo.

19. Et induit maledictionem sicut vestimentum, et intravit sicut aqua in interiora ejus, et sicut oleum in ossibus ejus
Fiat ei sicut vestimentum, quo operitur: et sicut zona, qua semper præcingitur.

6. "Set over him one who is godless,
An accuser at his right hand.

7. From the trial let him go forth guilty:
Let even his petition be reckoned as sin.

8. Let his days be few:
Let another take his office.
9. Let his children be orphans:
Let his wife be a widow.
10. May his children wander restlessly, begging:
May they be driven from their homes.
11. May the usurer seize all his belongings,
And strangers plunder the fruits of his toil.
12. Let none give him help;
Let none pity his orphans.
13. Let his race be doomed to destruction:
Blotted out be his name in a single generation.
14. May his father's guilt be remembered before the Lord,
And may his mother's sin not be blotted out:
15. Let them be ever before the Lord,
And let not their memory vanish from the earth;
16. Because he remembered not to do kindness,
17. But pursued the wretched and needy,
And the downhearted—to slay him.

18. Let the curse which he looked for light upon him:
He would not have blessing—be it far from him!
19. The curse he put on like a garment—
Let it reach to his vitals like water
Like oil unto his bones!

Let it be like the garment that clotheth him,
Like the girdle wherewith he is girt."

20. Hoc opus eorum, qui detrahunt mihi apud Dominum: et qui loquuntur mala adversus animam meam.
21. Et tu Domine, Domine, fac mecum propter nomen tuum: quia suavis est misericordia tua.
Libera me
22. Quia egenus, et pauper ego sum: et cor meum conturbatum est intra me.
23. Sicut umbra cum declinat, ablatus sum: et excussus sum sicut locustæ.

20. Such is the conduct before the Lord of my adversaries,
And of those that speak evil against me!
21. But Thou, O Lord Yahweh,
For Thy name's sake deal with me!
In Thy gracious kindness save me!

22. For I am poor and wretched,
And my heart is crushed within me.

23. Like a lengthening shadow I vanish;
Like locusts I am shaken off.

24. Genua mea infirmata sunt a jejunio : et caro mea immutata est propter oleum.
25. Et ego factus sum opprobrium illis : viderunt me, et moverunt capita sua.

24. My knees totter from fasting ;
My flesh is shrivelled for lack of oil.

25. I have became an object of mockery to them :
When they see me they shake their head.

26. Adjuva me Domine Deus meus : salvum me fac secundum misericordiam tuam.
27. Et sciant quia manus tua hæc : et tu Domine fecisti eam.

26. Help me, O Lord, my God,
And save me in Thy kindness.

27. Let them know that this thing is Thy hand,
That Thou, O Lord, hast done it.

28. Maledicent illi, et tu benedices : qui insurgunt in me, confundantur : servus autem tuus lætabitur.
29. Induantur qui detrahunt mihi, pudore : et operiantur sicut diploide confusione sua.
30. Confitebor Domino nimis in ore meo : et in medio multorum laudabo eum.
31. Quia astitit a dextris pauperis, ut salvam faceret a persequentibus animam meam.

28. Let them curse, but do Thou bless ;
Let my adversaries be put to shame,
But Thy servant shall rejoice.

29. Let my detractors be clad with dishonour,
And wrapped, as in a mantle, with shame.

30. But I will thank the Lord with loud voice,
I will praise Him in the midst of the throng.

31. For He stands at the poor man's right hand,
To save me from those that pursue me.

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1. *Laudem meam* : according to the Hebrew we should expect *Deus laudis meae,* ' O God the theme of my praise-song.'

Os peccatoris : this renders literally the Massoretic text. In the latter, however, we should probably read *resha'* (*iniquitas*) rather than *rasha'* (*peccator*) : *resha'* is a suitable parallel to *mirmah* (' deceit ') in the next clause : *os iniquitatis et doli* would then reproduce the Hebrew. The psalmist is not speaking of an individual opponent, but of the malice of a group of adversaries.

Apertum est represents a reading *patuaḥ* : the Massoretic text has *pataḥu=aperuerunt.*

4. The kindness and affection of the psalmist his enemies have requited with hatred, and yet, all the while, the psalmist gives himself to prayer (*orabam*)—including, of course, prayer for his enemies. The Hebrew is here very vivid : ' And I am prayer,' *i.e.*, ' I am all given to prayer.' This verse, and the whole description of the psalmist's position can be understood typically of Christ.

6. From here to verse 19 we have a specimen of the imprecations and calumnies with which his adversaries requited the friendship and love of the psalmist. It would seem as if some illness or other misfortune had overtaken the psalmist, and that his enemies rejoiced thereat, and prayed for its continuance and intensification.

6. The *peccator* and *diabolus* are, apparently, the same individual. The reference is not to Satan (though the Hebrew here has *saṭan*),

but to an accuser in a trial. The prosecutor, or accuser, as we see from Zach. iii. 1, stood at the right hand of the accused. It is not clear whether his enemies have here in view a trial of the psalmist before the Lord. This is probable, however, from the language of the psalm generally. If we take the trial referred to as being held before God, the *satan*, or accuser, would be like the Satan who puts Job to the test, and the enemies of the psalmist could be taken as wishing that his *satan* might be peculiarly hostile and malignant.

7. The very petition for mercy of the accused is to stand as a further reason for condemnation.

8. The 'office' in question is not defined. It is possible that in the exercise of his *episcopatus* the psalmist had especially roused the anger of his foes. The application of this verse to Judas by St. Peter in Acts i. 20 has caused this psalm to be known sometimes as *Psalmus Ischarioticus*.

10. His children are to wander ceaselessly about (*nutantes*) without fixed abode, and to depend on begging for their bread.

Habitationibus: the Hebrew has 'ruins,' *i.e.*, ruined dwellings: *cf.* Job xxx. 6.

11. *Substantia* renders the Hebrew 'all that he has.' *Labores*= the products of his toil.

13. The family is to die out in one generation. The Hebrew *'aḥer* ('next,' 'following' ought to be emended according to the Greek (=Vulgate) into *'eḥadh* ('one').

Nomen ejus: the Hebrew has 'their name,' referring it to the *nati*.

14. *Cf.* Exod. xx. 5.

15. Contra represents *neghedh*='before the face of.'

Dispereat: the Hebrew has *yakhreth*, 'May He cause to be cut off': the Greeks read the word *yikkareth*, 'Let it be cut off.'

16. It is difficult to imagine the words contained in verses 16–19 as said, even in imprecation, of the psalmist. It must be remembered, however, that the psalmist represents his foes as utterly blinded by their hatred of himself, and quite unable to see anything good in his conduct.

17. *Compunctum*: In the Vulgate *compungere*='to sadden, to offend': *compungi*='to be smitten with sorrow or regret, to bewail.' The Hebrew as it stands seems to mean 'downhearted'; but if the Greeks read here *n^e^khe' hallebhabh*, instead of the Massoretic *nikh'eh lebhabh*, the sense intended may be 'smitten to the heart,' *i.e.*, already wounded to death, half dead.

Mortificare is to be read with *persecutus est*, 'pursued . . . in order to murder.' For *mortificare cf.* Ps. xxxvi. 32; xliii. 22.

18. *Induit maledictionem sicut vestimentum*: curses were so customary with him that they could be compared to the garment which he wore next his person.

Sicut aqua, the reference here is to the waters of cursing, Num. v. 22.

Oil penetrates even through the finest pores, and might, therefore, be thought of as reaching even to the bones.

20. *Opus*=Hebrew *Pe'ullah,* 'the doing,' 'the conduct.' The utterance of the words in verses 6–19 against the psalmist is the *opus,* the conduct, of the psalmist's foes. *Opus* is not to be rendered, as it is often rendered, 'reward.' The psalmist returns here to the point which he had reached in verse 5.

22. Apparently illness or some other misfortune has befallen the psalmist, and his enemies have taken this as a token of God's displeasure, as a curse which has been merited by the psalmist's supposed misdeeds.

23. As the shadows lengthen out when the sunset is near, and vanish when the sun is set, so is the psalmist like the lengthening shadow, for his life is drawing to a close ; the sun of his life is setting.

Ablatus sum : Hebrew *neh^e^lakhti,* 'I am made to go.'

Excussus sum sicut locustae : the psalmist is like the locust that is driven hither and thither by the wind, or like the locust that is shaken off from a garment, or other object, on which it has alighted. The comparison brings out the utter weakness and helplessness of the psalmist.

24. *Caro mea immutata . . . oleum* : The Hebrew *kaḥash,* here rendered *immutata est,* means, in post-Biblical Hebrew, 'to grow thin.' The sense of the word here seems to be 'to shrivel up.' *Propter oleum* represents *mishshamen,* which really means 'away from (or, without) oil.' The anointing with oil was omitted in seasons of fasting, and the psalmist has, apparently, imposed on himself a period of fasting so as to recover God's favour.

25. *Cf.* Ps. xxi. 8.

27. Let them see that my troubles are Thy work, the mere shadow of Thy Hand, planned by Thee for my ultimate advantage.

28. Let them continue to curse (as in verses 6–19), but do Thou give me Thy blessing.

29. This is the answer to verses 18–19. *Diplois* is a Greek word, meaning a cloak wound twice round the body. Hence commentators have seen in the word a suggestion of double confusion invoked on the psalmist's foes. The Hebrew word, *m^e^'il,* means simply cloak or mantle.

31. The psalmist prays that Yahweh may stand at his right hand as his helper. He does not wish for an *accuser* at his right hand (as his adversaries desire in verse 6 above) but he looks confidently for the strong protection of the Lord, now and always.

A persequentibus animam meam : the Massoretic text has, 'From those who judge his soul' : the Vulgate (Greek) text is to be preferred.

PSALM CIX

THE MESSIAS AS KING AND PRIEST AND JUDGE

THE psalmist has heard in the spirit an oracle spoken by Yahweh to his 'Lord,' the Messias. In lyrical form he sets before us the words of the oracle, and the enthusiastic words which he himself addressed to Yahweh in reference to the divine oracle.

In verses 1–3 he tells how he has heard God summoning the Messias to share His divine throne, and to exercise the divine power which that sharing of God's throne implies. From Sion the Messias will rule, and will keep in subjection the enemies of Yahweh round about. By his birth the Messias is a king, and Yahweh has given him the oil of royal consecration among the sacred hills of Sion (see notes below). But the Messias is not merely to be a divine King: he is appointed also an eternal Priest—and that not by the utterance of any ordinary formula, but by an oath of God Himself (verse 4). This oath, which the psalmist in his ecstasy as prophet has heard, is irrevocable, for Yahweh repents not of it. By the oath the Messias is appointed a Priest forever after the manner of Melchisedech. The Kings of Israel, though they sometimes performed quasi-priestly functions, were not, as most of the heathen kings of the ancient Near East were wont to be, the chief priests, as well as the chief rulers of their people. But the Messias will be, in the fullest sense, both Priest and King. Hence his Priesthood cannot be that of the Aaronites: it must become like that of the mysterious King of Sion, Melchisedech, who appears bearing unbloody gifts in Gen. xiv. 18. Here (verse 4) the divine oracle ends, and the psalmist turns to Yahweh to forecast in glowing words the might and vigour with which his 'Lord'—the Messias who sits at the right hand of Yahweh—will exercise judgment against the enemies of the Messianic Kingdom. Like the Anointed of Ps. ii the Priest-King will break the power of his royal foes: he will defeat their armies over a wide extended battlefield, which, after the struggle will be strewn with the corpses of the slain. To make complete the defeat of his foes the victorious Priest-King and Judge will strike off the heads of the slain, and cast them into the way-side wady, with whose waters, as the psalmist grimly says, they may quench their thirst! (See Notes.) From the battle the Messias will go forth proudly as conqueror, with head raised aloft (verses 5–7).

The psalm is ascribed to David in the title. Our Lord speaks directly of David as its author (Mark xii. 35*ff.*; Luke xx. 41*ff.*; Matt. xxii. 41–46) and it is clear from His words that the Davidic origin of Ps. cix. was generally accepted by the Jews of Our Lord's time. It is clear also that Our Lord and His Jewish contemporaries looked on the Messias as the 'Lord' of the psalm. That the psalm is Davidic and Messianic was accepted without question in the Apostolic Age (see Acts ii. 34; vii. 55*ff.*; 1 Cor. xv. 24*ff.*; Ephes. i. 18–23; Heb. i. 3, 13; v. 6; vi. 20; vii. 17, 21; viii. 1; x. 12*f.*; 1 Peter iii. 22).

The Messianic reference of the psalm is demanded by the whole thought of the poem. David, the great king of Israel, would not have addressed any other than the Messias with the title, 'my Lord.' Again, only the Messias could be invited to share the throne and power of God. No ordinary king of Israel, and, indeed, no one merely mortal could receive an eternal priesthood. Neither could the abrogation of the Aaronite priesthood and the substitution for it of a priesthood like that of Melchisedech be attributed to any King of Sion except the Messias. Finally, to the Messias alone could God entrust the carrying out of the world-judgment.

All attempts to identify the Priest-King of this psalm with ordinary Israelite kings have failed. This is true particularly of the attempt to identify the hero of the psalm with the Maccabean prince, Jonathan, even though the latter was given a sort of priestly, as well as royal, rank. Simon, according to 1 Macc. xiv. 41, was appointed 'prince and high-priest for ever,' and some commentators have, therefore, sought to make a case for Simon as the 'Lord' of this psalm, and have thought to find confirmation for this view by pointing out that the initial consonants of verses 1*b*–4 of the psalm spell the name 'Simeon.' The acrostic, however, is an accident, and there is no good reason for regarding the priestly kingship of Simon as in any way like the power of the ancient Priest-King of Salem, Melchisedech. Besides, since we cannot deny the Davidic origin of the psalm, we are compelled to hold that the 'Lord' of whom David sings is the Messianic King.

1. Psalmus David. Dixit Dominus Domino meo : Sede a dextris meis :	1. A Psalm of David. Oracle of Yahweh to my Lord : (Messias as King.) " Sit thou at my right hand
Donec ponam inimicos tuos, scabellum pedum tuorum.	Till I make thy foes the footstool of thy feet.
2. Virgam virtutis tuæ emittet Dominus ex Sion : dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum.	2. Thy mighty sceptre Yahweh stretcheth forth ; From Sion rule in the midst of thy foes !
3. Tecum principium in die virtutis tuæ in splendoribus	3. With thee is princely power on the day of thy strength,

sanctorum: ex utero ante luciferum genui te.	In holy adornment; From the womb before the day-star I have begotten thee." (Messias, as Priest.)
4. Juravit Dominus, et non pœnitebit eum: Tu es sacerdos in æternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech.	4. Yahweh hath sworn, and repenteth it not: "Thou art a priest forever, After the manner of Melchisedech." (Messias as Judge of the world. The psalmist addresses Yahweh.)
5. Dominus a dextris tuis, confregit in die iræ suæ reges. 6. Judicabit in nationibus, implebit ruinas: conquassabit capita in terra multorum. 7. De torrente in via bibet: propterea exaltabit caput.	5. My Lord, at Thy right hand, Smiteth kings in the day of his wrath. 6. He executeth judgment among the peoples, Making destruction complete: He smiteth heads in a wide battle-field; 7. Of the brook by the wayside they drink. Therefore doth he raise his head.

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1. *Dixit*: the Hebrew has, *n^e'um*, 'Oracle of'; this is a solemn way of introducing a divine utterance: it practically characterises the psalm as a prophecy. In the technical language of the prophets *n^e'um* usually follows the oracle of God; in some instances in the prophets, as here, it precedes the words of the divine oracle. The psalmist speaks as if he had heard the words of Yahweh addressed to the person whom he calls 'my Lord' (*'^adoni*, 'my *'Adon*'). 'My Lord' is frequently used in Hebrew as a form of polite address (as in Gen. xxiii. 6; xxxiii. 8; xliv. 7): it is also used as a title of respect given to those in high position (as in 1 Kings xxii. 1). As David is the author of the psalm, then as Our Lord argues (Mark xii. 35*f.*, and parallels), the *'Adon* here spoken of must be higher in rank than David himself. A comparison of this psalm with Ps. ii will make it clear that the *'Adon* of Ps. cix is the same as the 'Anointed' of Ps. ii.

Sede a dextris meis: the Messias is invited to take the place of honour at the right hand of Yahweh, and is thus declared to be a participator in the glory and power of Yahweh.

Donec ponam . . . tuorum: the complete defeat and subjection of his foes is the token of the Messias' divine dignity and power. *Donec* is not intended to imply that the Messias would hold his power only until the defeat of the enemies should be accomplished: it refers only to what will happen in the interval named, and gives no information about any following period. It might almost be rendered 'while.' In the ancient East when a monarch wished to record a complete victory over his foes he was wont to have himself represented as treading on the prostrate bodies of his defeated enemies. Hence to make the foes of the Messias 'the footstool' of his feet is to make them utterly subject to his power.

2. *Virgam virtutis*='mighty sceptre.' The sceptre is the ruler's sceptre, the symbol of his power.

Emittet Dominus : the introduction of a statement about Yahweh into an oracle spoken by Yahweh, though not unparalleled, is strange. It is strange, too, that Yahweh, and not the Messias, is to stretch out the sceptre. The Messias has just been declared participant in the divine power and rule, and one would expect, therefore, that the Messias, not Yahweh, would stretch out the sceptre of royal power, particularly as both in the immediately preceding and the immediately following clauses the Messias is invited by Yahweh to perform a definite action. A command from Yahweh to the Messias, like 'Stretch forth thy sceptre' (*i.e.*, 'exercise thy power') would be perfectly in place here. This sense can be got by emending the Massoretic text, *maṭṭeh 'uzz^ekha yishlaḥ yahweh* into *maṭṭeh 'uzz^ekha sh^elaḥ l^ekha*, 'Send (or, 'stretch') forth thy sceptre.' 'Yahweh' is here omitted, since Yahweh is the speaker, and *l^ekha* is inserted on the basis of the Septuagint. The imperative *sh^elaḥ*, 'send' is uniform with *sede* and *dominare*. The Messias is commanded by God to exercise actively his royal power.

Ex Sion : it is better to connect this with *dominare* : Sion is the centre of Messianic rule, and thence the Messias must exercise his sway among the hostile peoples round about. Sion was the seat of the ancient Priest-King, Melchisedech, and it was the centre of the rule of David, the most important type of the Messias. The glories of the Messianic kingdom were pictured by Israel mostly as a renewal of the glories of David's empire and reign. Hence it was but natural that the Messias should appear as a ruler on Sion, holding in subjection, like David, the peoples who dwelt round about Palestine. The rendering of verse 2 should then be as follows :

Sceptrum potentiae tuum extende ;
E Sion dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum.

3. *Tecum principium in die virtutis tuae* : there is a wide difference here between the Massoretic text and the Greek (=Vulgate) ; the former has, *'amm^ekha n^edhabhoth b^eyom ḥelekha*, which might be rendered, 'Thy people come gladly on the day of thy muster'—suggesting the gathering of his willing and loyal subjects to the banners of the Messias when he sets out for war. Since, however, the destruction of the enemies of the Messias in battle is dealt with in detail in verses 6–7, it is not natural to find in verse 3 a reference to the mustering of the Messianic army. Hence we should be more inclined to follow here the text presupposed by the rendering of the Greek. It would be : *'imm^ekha n^edhibhoth b^eyom ḥelekha*, 'With thee is princely power on the day of thy strength.' Changing *ḥelekha* very slightly, and without interfering with the consonantal text, we get *ḥilakh*, which means 'thy birth.' Thus the text read by the Greeks may be pointed to give the sense, 'With thee is princely power on the day of thy birth.' This is obviously equivalent to the

assertion, 'Thou art by birth of royal rank.' The Messias, as Son of God, was not merely *invited* to be a divine King; he was so by his birth. *Cf.* Ps. ii. 6, 7.

In splendoribus sanctorum . . . genui te: this is the most difficult passage in the psalm. The Massoretic text which reads, *b^e^hadh^e^re-ḳodhesh mereḥem mishḥar l^e^kha ṭal yalduthekha*, is usually rendered, 'In holy adornment from the womb of the morning the dew of thy youth is thine,' and this is usually explained as meaning that the young men, who gather to the banners of the Messias, come in their enthusiasm out of the womb of the dawn, *i.e.*, at earliest dawn, and in their equipment for battle (holy adornment, for the coming warfare is 'holy') are as fresh and fair and numerous as are the dew-drops when the morning breaks. But if 3*a* does not speak of a muster, 3*b* cannot be taken as a description of the muster, and we are forced, therefore, to obandon the Massoretic reading of this difficult text. The Greeks took *mishḥar*, 'morning' as=*mishshaḥar*, 'before the morning' (*ante luciferum*), and where the Massoretes read *l^e^kha tal yalduthekha*, 'thine is the dew of thy youth,' the Greeks read, *y^e^lidh-tikha*, 'I have begotten thee.' Thus the Massoretic *l^e^kha tal* is totally omitted in the Hebrew text read by the Greek translators. It may be safely admitted, then, that the Hebrew text here has somehow become corrupted, and that the corruption took place before the Greek version was made. The Greek version contains obviously a reference to the birth or begetting of the Messias, but that is not precisely what we expect here. If our emendation of 3*a* is correct Yahweh has just referred to the divine sonship and inherited royalty of the Messias. We should expect, then, that Yahweh would go on to speak of the installation of the Messias as King on Sion. Yahweh has already said to the Messias: 'Sit at my right hand' (=Share in my divine power), and: 'Rule from Sion' (=Exercise earthly kingship). Then, further, it has just been said: 'Thou art a prince on the day of thy birth' (*i.e.* Thou inheritest divine Kingship by birth), and this ought to be completed by a declaration of the actual establishment of the Messias as King on Sion—something like what we have in Ps. ii. 6 (*cf.* Osee ii). Looking closely at the consonants of the Hebrew text we find that they suggest some useful and natural emendations of the Massoretic reading, and of the text which the Greeks must have had before them. In the first place *b^e^hadh^e^re ḳodhesh* (*in splendoribus sanctorum*) readily becomes *b^e^har^e^re ḳodhesh*, 'on the holy mountains' (this reading is actually contained in existing forms of the Hebrew text). Sion is familiar as 'the Holy Mountain,' and the plural, 'Holy Mountains' can easily be regarded as=the hills on which Jerusalem stands. This emendation disposes still further of the presence of a reference to a muster for a 'holy war' in verse 3. The remainder of the text is more difficult to emend. The mention of Sion, however, reminds us of Ps. ii. 6: 'I have established my

king on Sion, my holy mountain,' and leads us to expect a reference to the anointing of the Messias as King on the holy hills. The Hebrew text, as we have seen, was already corrupted before the Greek translation was made, and the Greeks omitted altogether certain elements found in our Massoretic text. The word *reḥem* (womb), which means actually the womb of a woman, can scarcely have stood in the primitive text. But it would be very intelligible as a marginal gloss to *ḥilk^e^ha* (' thy birth ') of 3*a*, when used with the preposition *min*, so that *mereḥem* may have been brought in from the margin opposite *ḥil^e^kha* : ' on the day of thy birth,' would be just as well and, perhaps, more clearly expressed by *mereḥem*, ' from the womb.' Discarding *mereḥem*, we are left with *mishḥar l^e^kha tal yalduthekha* : the consonants of *mishḥar* are the same as those of *mashaḥti*, with the exception of *r* which could be readily confused with *t*. *Mashaḥti*, means ' I have anointed,' and since *mashaḥ* is often followed by *l^e^melekh*, ' as king,' we are justified in reading the *l^e^kha tal* as *l^e^melekh*. So far we have now reached as the meaning of 3*c*, ' On the holy hills I have anointed as king ' ; we are still without an object to ' I have anointed,' and the Hebrew *yalduthekha*, ' thy youth,' or, as the Greeks read it, *y^e^lidhtikha* ('I have begotten thee '), has still to be accounted for. The simplest explanation seems to be that the consonants *l*, *d*, *th* of *yalduthekha* are simply the infinitive *ledheth*, ' begetting,' or, ' birth,' and that *ledheth*, like *mereḥem*, was originally a marginal gloss to *ḥil^e^kha*, ' thy birth.' The remaining consonants of *yalduthekha*, viz., *i* and *kh* ought to be read with *m*, *sh*, *ḥ*, *t* (=*mashaḥti*) as the pronominal suffix *ikha* : *m^e^shaḥtika*=' I have anointed thee.' Thus the whole clause would be *b^e^har^e^re kodhesh m^e^shaḥtikha l^e^melekh*, ' On the holy hills I have anointed thee as king.' This would be an exact parallel to Ps. ii. 6, and it would supply the declaration of the establishment of the Messias as King on Sion which is naturally in place here.

Verse 3 as emended would run in Latin :

Tecum principium in die nativitatis tuae ;
In montibus sanctis unxi te in regem.

It will be objected that all this is based on a great deal of rather arbitrary emendation, and that the changes proposed exclude a valuable Biblical testimony to the eternal generation of Christ. With regard to the latter point it must be remembered that 3*c*, though it constitutes in the Greek form of the text one of the clearest statements of the divinity and the consubstantiality with the Father of Christ, is never quoted in the New Testament. Even the author of Hebrews does not quote it, being content with much less clear texts in i. 5*ff*. and v. 5. It is not improbable that the text of *c* was still very uncertain in the Apostolic age, but it is likely that if that passage contained a clear reference to the generation of the

Messias it would have been quoted by one or other of the Apostolic writers.

4. Verses 4 and 5 depict the Messias as a priest. In the ancient East, royal and priestly power were usually united in a single individual. The most ancient king of Jerusalem whom we know, Melchisedech, was also a priest. The kings of Israel, though they sometimes performed quasi-priestly functions, were not priests in the proper sense: the priestly power belonged to the Levite family of Aaron. In this second strophe of the psalm the oracle declares that the Messianic King of Sion will be something more and greater than the kings of the Davidic House: like Melchisedech he will be priest, in the full sense, as well as King. Hence he will not be an Aaronite priest offering bloody sacrifices, but, like Melchisedech, associated with unbloody offerings. Yahweh has sworn that the Messias will be a Priest-King like Melchisedech, and that his priesthood will be forever: the psalmist has heard the oath, and gives us the exact words of the oracle in which Yahweh tells the Messias of the appointment by oath to the priestly dignity. The appointment is irrevocable, for Yahweh never can repent of His decree. The use of this text in the Epistle to the Hebrews is perfectly in harmony with its meaning in the psalm.

5. Here begins the description of the Messias as Judge of the world. The words of the divine oracle ended in verse 4, and what follows is addressed by the psalmist to Yahweh. The psalmist in verses 5–7 gives a forecast of the manner in which the Messianic Priest-King will triumphantly function as judge of the world.

Dominus a dextris tuis: this ought to be *Dominus meus a dextris tuis, i.e.,* the *Dominus* (*'Adon*) of verse 1. The Greeks, like the Massoretes, mistakenly took '*adoni*, 'my Lord,' as if it were "'*Adonai*," 'Lord'; the Lord of verse 1 was invited to sit at the right hand of Yahweh. Now, while he is still at the right hand of Yahweh (*a dextris tuis*), he proceeds to carry out God's judgments against God's enemies and his own. The day of God's wrath, the *Yom-Yahweh* (the 'Day of the Lord') is the day of God's wrath against the peoples; but it is also the day of the great Messianic judgment: the enemies of Yahweh are also the enemies of His Anointed. The royal enemies of the Messias are like the kings and princes who are represented as mustering their host against the Anointed in Ps. ii.

Confregit: the same Hebrew verb which is here rendered *confringet* is translated in verse 6 by *conquassabit*: the Hebrew verb means 'to smite' (*percutere,* as Jerome renders it), or, as referred to heads, possibly 'to strike off.' To strike off the heads of one's foes was for the Orientals to triumph over them completely.

6. *Judicabit*: will execute sentence. It is best to take *judicabit* as='when he carries out judgment.'

Implebit ruinas: this is usually rendered: 'He will make destruc-

tion complete.' The Hebrew has *male' g^e^wiyyoth*, which means, 'it will be full of corpses,' 'everything will be filled with corpses,' 'there will be abundance of corpses.' The Greeks read an active form of the verb *male'* ('to be full'). In the Greek text we have πτώματα (or πτῶμα), which might=*ruinae* or *cadavera*, where the Latin has *ruinas*. Jerome reading *ge'ayoth* has *valles*. *Cf.* Amos viii. 3: 'There shall be many corpses in every place,' and Ezech. xxxv. 8 (oracle against Edom): 'I will fill thy mountains with the slain, and thy hills and thy valleys and all thy channels: those slain by the sword shall sink down there.'

Conquassabit capita: the Hebrew has the collective *ro'sh, caput*. The Messias shall shatter, or better, perhaps, shall strike off the heads.

In terra multorum ought to be rather *in terra ampla* (as van Sante renders): the enemy are defeated over a wide extended battle-field.

De torrente in via bibet: the subject of bibet is not certain; it is usually taken to be the Messias and the verse is often interpreted as meaning that the victorious Messias, weary from the battle against his foes, like the soldiers of Gideon (Jud. vii. 5, 6) snatches a hasty draught from a wayside brook and thus refreshed, with head raised proudly aloft, continues the pursuit of his beaten foes (The incident in the life of Samson, Jud. xv. 18–19 is also often quoted as a parallel). Yet it might be said against this explanation that there is no need of an untiring pursuit of an utterly beaten foe, and that, therefore, the picture of the divine Messias snatching up the hasty draught from the brook is out of place. The drinking from the brook has also been explained as the draught of sorrow which Christ had to take to win complete victory, and sometimes again commentators have seen here in the brook a symbol of the ever-present fountain of the divinity from which Our Lord constantly derived new strength. All such explanations are imperfect, and if the Messias is not the subject of *bibet* they are out of place. The Latin *capita* in verse 6 represents, as we have seen, a singular *ro'sh*, used collectively in the Hebrew. Now, as far as the original text goes, *caput* could be the subject of *yishteh* (*bibet*), and the drinking from the wayside wady (*torrens*) could be regarded as grimly predicated of the stricken-off heads of the foe. In the passage above quoted from Ezech. xxxv. 8 we see that a special punishment threatened to the Edomites is that the corpses of their dead shall fall in the hills and valleys and *all the channels* of the land of Edom; they shall lie there, the prophet implies, unburied. So with the enemies of the Messias: many a head of his fallen foes shall be cast into the wady by the way, and there shall drink its water. The picture of the heads of the slain drinking the water of the brook is drastic, but it is not unoriental.

Et exultabit caput: having completely defeated his foes, the Messias triumphantly raises his head.

PSALM CX

THE GREAT DEEDS OF THE LORD

IN this simple song the psalmist sings the praise of the glory and goodness, the truth and faithfulness of Yahweh, as the God of the Covenant with Israel. The great deeds wrought for His people by the Lord in the distant past are recalled—the deeds which were the pledge of God's Covenant with Israel, the theme of Israel's boast and song, and the ground of Israel's persistent confidence in the loving care of Yahweh. As God was ever faithful to the Covenant in the past, so will He ever be mindful thereof. To realise with gratitude the goodness of Yahweh and to recognise with reverential awe that all His works are based on inflexible truth and fairness is true wisdom, for as the author of Proverbs puts it, 'the fear of the Lord is the chiefest wisdom.'

This psalm and the next following form a pair both in form and content. They are both alphabetic psalms; each consists of twenty-two verses, and each of the twenty-two verses begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Ps. cx celebrates the glory of Yahweh as it has been shown in the history of His people: Ps. cxi celebrates the good fortune of the pious in such a way that the predicates applied to Yahweh in Ps. cx are transferred, with a certain modification of meaning, to the just man. It would seem as if Ps. cxi were composed as a sort of counterpoise to Ps. cx, and it is probable that both psalms come from the same hand.

Alleluia.	Alleluia
1. Confitebor tibi Domine in toto corde meo: in consilio justorum, et congregatione.	1' I praise Thee, Lord, with my whole heart *b* In the circle of the just, in the Assembly.
2. Magna opera Domini: exquisita in omnes voluntates ejus.	2*g* Great are the works of the Lord— *d* Well worthy of study to those that love them.
3. Confessio et magnificentia opus ejus: et justitia ejus manet in sæculum sæculi.	3*h* Splendid and glorious is His work, *w* And His justice abideth for ever.
4. Memoriam fecit mirabilium suorum misericors et miserator Dominus:	4*z* A memorial of His wonders He hath provided: *ḥ* Gracious and merciful is the Lord.
5. Escam dedit timentibus se. Memor erit in sæculum testamenti sui:	5*ṭ* Food He hath given to them that fear Him; *y* He remembereth ever His Covenant.
6. Virtutem operum suorum annuntiabit populo suo:	6*k* The power of His deeds He hath shown to His people.

7 Ut det illis hæreditatem Gentium : opera manuum ejus veritas, et judicium.	7*l* In giving them the heritage of the heathen.
8. Fidelia omnia mandata ejus : confirmata in sæculum sæculi, facta in veritate et æquitate.	*m* The works of His hands are Truth and Right ; *n* Trustworthy are all His decrees, *s* Stable for ever and ever, ' Being wrought in truth and fairness.
9. Redemptionem misit populo suo : mandavit in æternum testamentum suum. Sanctum, et terribile nomen ejus :	9*p* Deliverance He hath sent to His people. *ṣ* He hath enjoined His Covenant for ever *ḳ* Holy and awful is His name.
10. Initium sapientiæ timor Domini. Intellectus bonus omnibus facientibus eum : laudatio ejus manet in sæculum sæculi.	10*r* The fear of the Lord is the chiefest wisdom ; *s* Sound insight belongs to all who practise it. *t* Its praise endureth for all ages.

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1. *Consilium* : Hebrew *sodh*, an intimate gathering of friends, an intimate circle.

Congregatio in the parallelism ought to be equivalent in meaning to *consilium*, but the Greek translators, apparently, intended to make a distinction here between a private circle of the just and the ' Assembly,' or Congregation, of the people. Some commentators see in the ' circle of the just ' an indication of the post-Exilic period, when, as it is known, groups, or conventicles of pious men were frequently formed among the people.

2. *Exquisita* : the Latin (reproducing literally the Greek) means that the works of the Lord are specially chosen and wrought so as to declare accurately His will. Whosoever, then, wishes to ascertain God's will can discover it by studying His works—particularly His deeds on behalf of Israel. The Hebrew, *D^e^rushim l^e^khol ḥ^e^phṣehem*, means ' Worthy of study (Jerome, *exquirenda*) are they to all those who take pleasure therein.' The *voluntates* of the Latin text is due to the rendering of *ḥephṣehem* as if it were the plural of *ḥepheṣ* (*voluntas*, ' good-pleasure ') with a suffix referring to Yahweh. *Ḥephṣehem* is, however, more likely the plural of the participle *ḥapheṣ* (=one who delights in) with the plural suffix referring to ' works ' ; ' their pleasure-takers '=those who take pleasure in them. Those who delight in God's works will be rewarded by seeking to study them. Since, however, God's works can be understood only in so far as His purpose (or will, *voluntas*) in them is known, the Latin rendering is not far from the sense of the Hebrew.

3. *Confessio* and *magnificentia* are used, after the Hebrew idiom, instead of adjectives. Everything which God does is a reason for

praising and glorifying Him. *Justitia* seems to mean here God's gracious providence towards His people.

4. *Memoriam fecit, etc.* : by constantly performing new deeds of graciousness, Yahweh reminds Israel of His mercies in the past, and makes it clear that He is, indeed, a God of grace and mercy. *Misericors et miserator, ḥannun wᵉraḥum,* reminds one of the standing epithets of Allah among the Muslims, *Arraḥman arraḥim.*

5. *Escam dedit* : this may be a reference to the manna ; but it may also be merely a general declaration of God's great goodness. The word *tereph* is here used in the unusual sense of 'bread,' 'food,' because of the exigencies of the acrostic.

6. *Virtutem operum suorum* may='His mighty works' : the special reference here and in the next verse is to the conquest of Palestine.

7. *Illis,* the Hebrews. *Veritas* and *judicium* are used in the same manner as *confessio* and *magnificentia* in verse 3. The establishment of Israel in Canaan was in accordance with the 'truth,' or 'fidelity' of God : it was also in accordance with 'right,' because the Canaanites had merited defeat and extinction by their godlessness.

8. The *mandata* are the decrees of God as Ruler of the world : they are firmly established and above all change. In truth and fairness these decrees are executed.

9. The *redemptio* is not merely the rescue from Egypt : it includes also the rescue from the Babylonian Exile. The Covenant of God with Israel was not set up for the Exodus period merely.

10. See Proverbs i. 7 ; ix. 10. The 'beginning of wisdom' is not=elementary wisdom, but the chief, or best, thing of wisdom, the highest wisdom, or, perhaps, the basis of wisdom. All who practise the highest wisdom, which is the fear of the Lord, acquire a sound understanding, or insight (*intellectus bonus*).

Laudatio ejus : in the Hebrew the pronominal suffix (=*ejus*) probably refers to Yahweh.

PSALM CXI

THE FEAR OF THE LORD AND ITS FRUITS

THIS psalm, as has been said in the introduction to Ps. cx, applies to the just man and his works the things which are said of Yahweh and His works in Ps. cx. As Ps. cx ends with the praise of the fear of the Lord as life's highest wisdom, so this psalm begins with a reference to the man who practises that wisdom, and then goes on to describe the blessedness of his condition. If the two psalms are read side by side it will be realised how strikingly the predicates applied to Yahweh and His works in Ps. cx are here transferred to the just man (the man that fears the Lord) and his doings. Ps. cxi may be taken, in a sense, as an elaborate way of saying that the life of the just man is a sort of participation in the life of God. This psalm, like Ps. cx, is alphabetically arranged, each of the twenty-two lines of which it consists beginning with the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In the Vulgate text the psalm is connected with the time immediately following the return from the Babylonian Exile—the time of the prophets Aggaeus and Zachary. If the two psalms, cx and cxi, are, as seems not unlikely, from the same author, the title of Ps. cxi determines the date of Ps. cx also. It would seem that in the original text of the Septuagint both psalms were connected by their superscriptions with the time of Aggaeus and Zachary.

Alleluia, Reversionis Aggaei, et Zachariae.

1. Beatus vir, qui timet Dominum : in mandatis ejus volet nimis.
2. Potens in terra erit semen ejus : generatio rectorum benedicetur.
3. Gloria, et divitiæ in domo ejus : et justitia ejus manet in sæculum sæculi.
4. Exortum est in tenebris lumen rectis : misericors, et miserator, et justus.
5. Jucundus homo qui miseretur et commodat, disponet sermones suos in judicio :
6. Quia in æternum non commovebitur.

Alleluia : for the return of Aggaeus and Zachary.

1' Happy is the man that feareth the Lord,
b That delighteth greatly in His commands :
2*g* Mighty in the land will be his seed ;
d The generation of the upright will be blessed.
3*h* Splendour and wealth are in his house,
w And his justice abideth forever.

4*g* He hath risen in the darkness, a light for the upright,
ḥ Merciful, gracious, and just.
5*ṭ* Fortunate is the man that is kind and lendeth,
y He will maintain his words aright,
6*k* For he shall never be moved.

7. In memoria æterna erit justus: ab auditione mala non timebit.	7*l* The just man shall be an eternal memorial.
Paratum cor ejus sperare in Domino,	*m* Evil report he shall not fear,
8. Confirmatum est cor ejus: non commovebitur donec despiciat inimicos suos.	8*n* Fixed is his heart, firmly trusting in the Lord, *s* Established is his heart, he is not moved, ' Until he looketh on (the defeat of) his foes.
9. Dispersit, dedit pauperibus: justitia ejus manet in sæculum sæculi, cornu ejus exaltabitur in gloria.	9*p* He giveth lavishly to the poor; *ṣ* His justice abideth for ever. *ḳ* His horn is exalted in honour.
10. Peccator videbit, et irascetur, dentibus suis fremet et tabescet: desiderium peccatorum peribit.	10*r* The sinner seeth it, and is vexed; *s* He gnasheth his teeth, and pineth away: *t* The hope of the godless cometh to naught.

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1. Compare the beginning of Ps. i. *In mandatis ejus volet*: *cf.* Ps. cx. 2, note.

2. *Potens*: Hebrew, *gibbor*, a 'hero,' 'a man of renown.' *Semen* is used collectively='offspring,' 'descendants.' *Generatio*, the whole race, or class.

3. *Gloria*: the Hebrew has *hon*, wealth, substance. The Greeks read *hodh*, glory, splendour. Note the expression here of the common Hebrew belief that the just man is prosperous in wordly things.

Et justitia ejus, etc.: *cf.* Ps. cx. 3, where exactly the same thing is said of the justice of God: *cf.* also verse 9 below. The 'justice' of the just man is either his condition of justice (=grace) before God, or, possibly, the reward of his justice.

4. *Exortum est*: as far as the Hebrew goes this might be *exortus est*, referring to the man that feareth the Lord. Such a perfect man might come to the upright who were in affliction (symbolised by the 'darkness'), as a light in darkness. Since the adjectives which immediately follow seem to be predicates of the just man, it is reasonable to make the just man the light that shines in the darkness. In Ps. cx. 4 *misericors et miserator* are epithets applied directly to Yahweh. For the idea of the light in darkness see Ps. xcvi. 11. Because Yahweh was a 'light in darkness' to His servants, so must the just man, in the peculiar manner of this psalm, be likened also to a light in the darkness. For the thought generally *cf.* Is. lviii. 7–10.

5. *Jucundus*=Hebrew *ṭobh*, 'good,' 'fortunate'; it is practically the same as *beatus* of verse 1.

Disponet sermones, etc.: *sermones suos* reproduces *dᵉbharau*, which may mean, 'his words,' or 'his affairs.' The verse means, therefore: 'He will order (or, maintain) his words aright,' or, 'He will base His affairs on justice.' Just as the works of the Lord are truth and fair-

ness (Ps. cx. 7), so the just man is, in all things, fair: he will never be turned aside from the path of fairness—*non commovebitur*.

7. *Cf.* Ps. cx. 4; the just man, like God, sets up by his deeds an everlasting memorial.

Sperare: the Hebrew participle *baṭuaḥ*, 'trusting,' was read by the Greeks apparently, as an infinitive. *Cf.* with the verse Is. xxvi. 3.

Non commovebitur: the Hebrew has *lo' yira'*, 'he shall not fear.'

Donec does not imply that he shall afterwards fear.

Despiciat: Hebrew *yir'eh b*^{e},='sees his pleasure in,' 'rejoices to behold the defeat of.'

9. *Dispersit dedit*: the two verbs together mean that he has lavishly given.

Cornu ejus: *cf.* 1 Kings ii. 1: 'My horn is exalted in the Lord.' *In gloria*=with glory. *Cf.* Ps. lxxiv. 11.

10. The concluding words of the psalm, like its beginning, seem to be an echo of Ps. i.

PSALM CXII

PRAISED BE THE NAME OF YAHWEH

WITH this psalm begins the Hallel (Ps. cxii–cxvii) which was sung at the three great pilgrimage festivals, Pasch, Pentecost and Tabernacles, and at other times. At the Pasch, Psalms cxii and cxiii, 1–8 were sung before the Paschal Supper, and Psalms cxiii. 9–26 ; cxiv, cxv, cxvi ; after the Paschal Supper (Matt. xxvi. 30 is possibly a reference to the Hallel).

Psalm cxii is a hymn in honour of the greatness and justice of Yahweh. The Lord is Ruler of all peoples, and His glory surpasses all the glory of the heavens. There is none like Him among the gods. Yet, transcendently glorious as He is, His kindness and His justice are as illimitable as His glory. Though His throne is high, He does not refuse to look with interest on the lowly. The poor and despised He raises, in His impartial justice, to princely honour, and the childless wife He transforms into the joyous mother of many children.

The conclusion of the psalm reminds one strongly of the Song of Anna (1 Kings ii. 1–10) and of the Magnificat. The thought and imagery of the psalm recall also the wonderful chapters xl–lv of Isaias. Sung at the Pasch, or one of the other great feasts, this psalm became an enthusiastic proclamation of Israel's faith in the ultimate triumph of justice in the world and of her hope that Yahweh would at last be recognised by all men as their God and Lord.

Alleluia.

1. Laudate pueri Dominum : laudate nomen Domini.
2. Sit nomen Domini benedictum, ex hoc nunc, et usque in sæculum.
3. A solis ortu usque ad occasum, laudabile nomen Domini.
4. Excelsus super omnes Gentes Dominus, et super cœlos gloria ejus.

5. Quis sicut Dominus Deus noster, qui in altis habitat,
6. Et humilia respicit in cœlo et in terra ?
7. Suscitans a terra inopem, et de stercore erigens pauperem :

Alleluia !

1. Praise, O ye servants, the Lord,
   Praise ye the name of the Lord.
2. May the Name of the Lord be blessed
   From this time forth and for ever !
3. From sunrise to sunset
   Let the name of the Lord be praised.
4. Exalted above all the peoples is the Lord ;
   Above the heavens is His glory.

5. Who is like the Lord, our God,
   Who dwelleth on high,
6. Who looketh on the lowly,
   In heaven and on earth ;
7. Who raiseth from the dust the needy,
   And from the mire the poor,

8. Ut collocet eum cum principibus, cum principibus populi sui.
9. Qui habitare facit sterilem in domo, matrem filiorum lætantem.

8. To set him beside princes,
Beside the princes of his people ;
9. Who maketh the barren one to dwell in the house,
A glad mother of sons.

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1. *Pueri* : ' servants,' Hebrew *'abhde* ; *cf.* Ps. cxxxiv. 1.

2. *Ex hoc nunc* : *nunc* is treated here as a substantive, and *hoc* is a sort of article. *Cf.* Ps. xv. 1.

3. *Laudabile* : better, ' Let it be praised.' *Cf.* Mal. i. 11.

4. This verse implies that Yahweh is accepted as God also of the heathen, just as the preceding clause implies the universality of His praise.

5. *Quis sicut* : *i.e.*, among the gods.

6. High as God's throne is, He does not disdain to take interest in the obscure and lowly. *Humilia respicit* renders the idiomatic Hebrew, ' Making low to look,' *i.e.*, who looketh low down, even to the hidden and obscure.

In coelo et terra : if this goes with *humilia* we must think of God as looking on the *humilia* even in heaven. The Hebrew favours this way of taking the text. Yet it is difficult to give a clear meaning to ' *humilia in coelo*,' and hence some commentators have excised the words, *in coelo*, and others have proposed to read *in coelo et in terra* with *Quis sicut Dominus Deus noster*. On this last view, *Qui in altis habitat et humilia respicit* would be a description of Yahweh inserted in the question, ' Who is like unto Yahweh, etc.' In the following verses the psalmist gives instances of God's care for *humilia in terra*.

7–8. A quotation from 1 Kings ii. 8—the Song of Anna. With verse 8 *cf.* Job xxxvi. 7. Theodoret quotes as instances of verses 7–8, David, Joseph and Moses.

9. *Sterilem in domo* : Hebrew *'ᵃḳereth habbayith*, ' the unfruitful one of the house,' *i.e.*, ' she whose house is barren.' Barrenness was regarded in Israel as a disgrace : hence the wife who has long been childless rejoices greatly when she bears children. She becomes then ' the glad mother of sons.' *Cf.* 1 Kings ii. 5 : ' They that were barren give birth to seven.' *Cf.* also Is. liv. 1 : ' Rejoice thou barren one, that hast not borne : burst into shouts of joy thou that hast not travailed ; for more are the sons of the desolate than the sons of the married one, saith Yahweh.' *Cf.* Gal. iv. 27.

PSALM CXIII

VERSES 1–8 of this psalm appear as Psalm cxiv, and verses 9–26 as Psalm cxv in the Massoretic text. Most modern critics (including some Catholic writers) follow the Massoretic arrangement, and regard the first eight and the last eighteen verses of the Vulgate Psalm cxiii as forming two independent psalms, the first of which is a hymn in praise of the mighty deeds of Yahweh at the Exodus, and the second an antiphonal liturgical song which served, perhaps, as an accompaniment to the offering of sacrifice in the Temple. This liturgical poem is, in the main, an emphatic assertion of faith in Yahweh and of trust in His power to give help in time of need.

In the older versions of the Psalter, and even in many Hebrew MSS., the two parts appear as a single psalm. It is possible, moreover, to see a certain literary unity in the Vulgate Psalm cxiii. The first eight verses could be taken as an Introduction supplying the historical ground for the confident prayer in verses 9–10. Then verses 11–16 might be regarded as a telling answer to the question in verse 10: 'Where is their God?' and verses 17–26 would naturally follow as a declaration of deep confidence in, and gratitude towards, the living and mighty God of Israel.

Here, while not undertaking to decide whether the Vulgate Psalm cxiii is made up of two originally unconnected and quite disparate poems, we shall, for the sake of convenience, treat of the two parts of the psalm, verses 1–8 and verses 9–26, separately.

CXIII 1-8

THE WONDERS OF THE EXODUS

THIS hymn to God's glory and power in the Exodus is poetically one of the finest passages in the Psalter. It is peculiarly regular in construction, swift in the movement of its thought, and strikingly vivid in its imagery. It consists of four short strophes.

In the first strophe (1–2), the poet shows how the Exodus made the Hebrew people in an intimate way the possession of Yahweh. Juda became His sanctuary, and Israel his special belonging: the Hebrews in general became Yahweh's 'holy people,' His 'royal priesthood.' The psalmist has fully realised that the events of the

Exodus were the beginnings of the national life of Israel. The designation of Juda as the sanctuary of Yahweh is an implied reference to the Temple: it may indicate, perhaps, that the psalm was composed after the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C.

In the second strophe (3–4), the poet in a few brief words makes the chief incidents of the Exodus and of the desert-wanderings stand out vividly; he depicts the Red Sea fleeing in dread before the coming of Israel, the Jordan rushing back headlong towards its source, and Sinai so quaking at the presence of Yahweh that the poet likens its motion to the frisking of lambs.

In the third strophe (5–6), the psalmist asks the Sea, and River, and Mountain with a sort of ironical chiding why they have acted with such strange want of dignity.

In the final strophe (7–8) he answers his own question. Before the face of Yahweh, the mighty God, at whose command water leaped from the rock, nature must tremble with reverent fear.

Alleluia.

1. In exitu Israel de Ægypto, domus Jacob de populo barbaro.

2. Facta est Judæa sanctificatio ejus, Israel potestas ejus.

3. Mare vidit, et fugit: Jordanis conversus est retrorsum.

4. Montes exsultaverunt ut arietes, et colles sicut agni ovium.

5. Quid est tibi mare quod fugisti: et tu Jordanis, quia conversus es retrorsum?

6. Montes exsultastis sicut arietes, et colles sicut agni ovium.

7. A facie Domini mota est terra, a facie Dei Jacob.

8. Qui convertit petram in stagna aquarum, et rupem in fontes aquarum.

Alleluia.

1. When Israel went forth from Egypt,
The House of Jacob from a people of alien tongue,

2. Juda became His sanctuary,
Israel the sphere of His rule

3. The sea beheld it and fled;
The Jordan turned back on itself;

4. The mountains skipped like rams,
And the hills like the young of the flock.

5. What aileth thee, Sea, that thou fleeest?
Jordan, that backward thou turnest?

6. Mountains, that ram-like ye skip,
Hills, like the young of the flock?

7. Before the Lord the earth trembleth,
Before the God of Jacob,

8. Who turneth the rock into pools of water,
And the flint into water-springs.

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1. *Barbaro*: Hebrew *lo'ez*, 'speaking indistinctly,' 'stammering.' The Hebrews, like the Greeks, regarded foreign tongues as indistinct and stammering. *Cf.* Ps. lxxx. 6 (also, 1 Cor. xiv. 11).

2. *Sanctificatio*: Hebrew, *ḳodhesh*, sanctuary. The reference is to the Temple.

Potestas=object of rule, or sphere of authority ; Hebrew, *mamsh*^{e}-*lothau*. *Cf.* Exod. xv. 17.

3. The Sea is, of course, the Red Sea, and its fleeing is the division of its waters as described in Exod. xiv. What the Sea beheld is not said, so as to heighten the dramatic intensity of the situation. In verse 7 the psalmist explains the cause of the Red Sea's terror. *Cf.* Ps. xlvii. 6.

The turning back of the Jordan is described in Jos. iii : *cf.* Ps. xvii. 16. In the historical prose narrative the effects produced on the Sea and the River are ascribed immediately to the efficacy of God's power : here they are explained poetically as due to the trembling dread of natural forces before the presence of God.

4. *Montes exsultaverunt*: the poet here again uses his poetic licence, and speaks of Sinai as ' mountains ' and ' hills.' For the events here recalled, see Exod. xix. 16–25. The quaking of the mountain is poetically exaggerated into a motion that might be likened to the frisking of lambs (*cf.* Ps. lxvii. 9 ; Judges v. 5). The same imagery of hills skipping or leaping is present in Ps. xxviii. 6.

5. The psalmist here questions the Red Sea, the Jordan, and Sinai as if they had acted in unbecoming fashion. *Quid est tibi*=' what ails thee ? '

7. Instead of waiting for their answer the psalmist responds to his own question approving of their conduct. Sea, River, and Mountain had good reason to tremble before Yahweh, for He is the mighty God at whose word streams of water sprang from the flinty rock. The two miracles of the production of water from the rock (Exod. xvii. 6 ; Num. xx. 8–11) are for the psalmist a peculiarly striking proof of Yahweh's power over nature. Note the poetic exaggeration which speaks of the turning of the rock—the flinty rock—into pools and springs of water. *Cf.* Ps. cvi. 35 ; Is. xli. 18 ; Deut. viii. 15.

Instead of *mota est* the Massoretic text has the imperative ' tremble ' ; the psalmist, instead of apologising for the terror of nature before Yahweh, bids earth to continue to show its reverential awe in the presence of its God.

CXIII 9-26

YAHWEH AND THE IDOLS

In the translation below, this second part of Ps. cxiii has been treated as an antiphonal, liturgical song, and a conjectural arrangement of the parts assigned to the different singers, or groups of singers, has been made.

The song begins with a prayer of the people assembled for worship

(verses 9–10). In this prayer Yahweh is entreated to be mindful of His people, Israel, both for the sake of His customary graciousness and fidelity, and to prevent the possibility of mockery on the part of the heathen. It is true that Israel does not deserve any help from the Lord, for she has sinned, but, for His own sake, Yahweh ought to afford help.

In verses 11–16 a choir of special singers makes a contrast between Yahweh and the gods of the heathen. Yahweh is a living and mighty God, but the gods of the heathens are mere products of man's handiwork—helpless things, without sense or life. If the heathens mock Israel because she trusts in Yahweh, with infinitely more reason do they deserve to be mocked who put their trust in idols that are deaf and dumb and blind and altogether impotent.

In verses 17–19 the different sections of the worshippers present—the people generally (Israel) those of the priestly class (House of Aaron), and the Proselytes (Those who fear the Lord) declare solemnly their trust in Yahweh.

After verse 19 we may suppose a pause during which the sacrifice was offered. Then in verses 20–21 the priest who is entrusted with the giving of the blessing pronounces it over the three groups already mentioned, and in verse 22 a choir repeats the blessing, applying it to the entire people. The blessing invoked on the worshippers appears here more or less explicitly as an increase in the number of the people.

In verses 22–26 the people join in a song, as at the beginning. In the introductory prayer they had asked for Yahweh's help for Israel, because the kindness and fidelity of Yahweh demanded that such help should be given, and because if it were not given the heathens might come to look on Yahweh as helpless. Now the Lord is besought for help on the ground that if Israel is destroyed, He will have no real worshippers on earth. Sheol is so far removed from the heaven which Yahweh has chosen for dwelling-place that the Lord has no interest in its dwellers, and receives thence no worship of praise. Let Him then, keep Israel alive, and Israel will be mindful, on her part, of the ever-binding duty of praising Yahweh.

	(The people)
9. Non nobis Domine, non nobis : sed nomini tuo da gloriam.	9. Not to us, O Lord, not to us, But to Thy name give glory,
10. Super misericordia tua, et veritate tua : nequando dicant Gentes : Ubi est Deus eorum ?	10. For the sake of Thy kindness and truth, Lest the heathens should say : ' Where is their God ? '
	(Choir)
11. Deus autem noster in cœlo : omnia quæcumque voluit, fecit.	11. Our God is in heaven : All that He willeth, He doth :
12. Simulacra Gentium argentum, et aurum, opera manuum hominum.	12. The heathen idols are but silver and gold The works of men's hands.

13. Os habent, et non loquentur : oculos habent, et non videbunt.
14. Aures habent, et non audient : nares habent, et non odorabunt.
15. Manus habent, et non palpabunt : pedes habent, et non ambulabunt : non clamabunt in gutture suo.
16. Similes illis fiant qui faciunt ea : et omnes qui confidunt in eis.

13. They have a mouth and speak not ;
Eyes they have and see not ;
14. Ears they have and hear not ;
Nostrils they have and smell not ;
15. They have hands and feel not ;
They have feet and walk not ;
They cry not aloud with their throat.
16. Let those that make them become like to them,
And those also that trust in them.

17. Domus Israel speravit in Domino : adjutor eorum et protector eorum est.

(The Levites)
17. The House of Israel trusteth in the Lord !

(People)
He is their Help and their Shield !

18. Domus Aaron speravit in Domino : adjutor eorum et protector eorum est,

(Levites)
18. The House of Aaron trusteth in the Lord !

(People)
He is their Help and their Shield !

19. Qui timent Dominum, speraverunt in Domino : adjutor eorum et protector eorum est.

(Levites)
19. The fearers of the Lord trust in the Lord

(People)
He is their Help and their Shield !

20. Dominus memor fuit nostri : et benedixit nobis :
Benedixit domui Israel : benedixit domui Aaron.
21. Benedixit omnibus, qui timent Dominum, pusillis cum majoribus.

(The priest who gives blessing)
20. The Lord will be mindful of us,
And will bless us.
He will bless the House of Israel ;
He will bless the House of Aaron ;
21. He will bless all who fear the Lord—
The little and the great.

22. Adjiciat Dominus super vos : super vos, et super filios vestros.
23. Benedicti vos a Domino, qui fecit cœlum, et terram.

(Choir)
22. May the Lord grant you increase—
Unto you and your children !
23. Blessed be ye by the Lord
Who hath made heaven and earth !

24. Cœlum cœli Domino : terram autem dedit filiis hominum.
25. Non mortui laudabunt te Domine : neque omnes, qui descendunt in infernum.
26. Sed nos qui vivimus, benedicimus Domino, ex hoc nunc et usque in sæculum.

(People)
24. The heavens belong to the Lord,
But the earth He hath given to men.
25. Not the dead will praise Thee, O Lord,
Nor any who go down to the pit.
26. But we who still live praise the Lord,
From this time forth and forever !

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9. Israel is humbled and prays for help, but help is less needful

for the rescue of Israel than it is for the honour of Yahweh's name. If Israel becomes still weaker and more wretched, the heathen may come to ask : ' Where is the God of whom they boast ? ' ; ' Is Yahweh unable to help His people ? ' Besides, the kindness which Yahweh has shown in the past, and His fidelity to His promises must induce Him to interfere once again on Israel's behalf.

10. Gives us a specimen of heathen mockery of Israel and of Yahweh.

11. We have here a proud answer to the heathen question : our God could help if He chose. He is enthroned in heaven, while the gods whom you worship are merely the products of man's handiwork on earth. With the description of the powerlessness of the heathen gods compare Deut. iv. 28 ; Is. xliv. 9–20 ; Jer. x. 3 ; Wisd. xiii. 10 ; Ps. cxxxiv. 15–18.

12. *Simulacra gentium* : Hebrew, ' their idols.' In the following verses the lifelessness and helplessness of the heathen idols is vividly expressed.

15. They can give no revelations to their worshippers ; nor can they know the thoughts of men's hearts ; nor anything that happens on earth. They are dumb and blind.

16. They have no power to hear the prayers of those that serve them or to smell the sweet savour of the sacrifices offered to them. Let those, then, that make them, and trust in them become blind, and deaf, and dumb, and altogether helpless, like them.

17–19. For the threefold division *cf.* also verses 20–21 below, and Ps. cxvii. 2–4 ; and Ps. cxxxiv. 19–20. In verse 17 the Hebrew text has ' Israel ' simply. *Protector* : Hebrew, ' Shield.'

19. ' Those who fear the Lord ' are often identified with the Proselytes ; *cf.* Is. lvi. 6 ; Ps. cvi. 38. Compare also Acts x. 1, 22 ; xiii. 7, 26.

20. The perfects in verses 20 and 21 are the perfects of prophetic certainty. Hence we may translate, ' will surely bless,' etc.

21. ' The little and the great ' are, apparently, the proselytes of lesser or greater importance.

22. The ' increase ' prayed for is increase of population (*cf.* Gen. xxx. 24) ; or possibly, increase in the number of the proselytes.

24. This verse develops the words in verse 23. God is Creator of heaven and earth, and can, therefore, freely dispose of both. Heaven He has chosen for Himself, and earth He has set apart for men. The Latin rendering *Coelum coeli* is not exact ; the Hebrew means : ' The heavens are the heavens of Yahweh,' *i.e., Coelum est coelum Domino.*

25. It would be of no profit to the Lord if Israel disappeared from earth to join the dwellers in Sheol : the dwellers of Sheol do not praise Him. *Cf.* Ps. vi. 6 ; xxix. 10 ; lxxxvii. 11–13 ; xciii. 17.

Qui descendunt in infernum, ' who go down to Sheol ' ; Hebrew

has: 'Who go down to silence' which strikingly suggests the absence of praising song in Sheol.

26. But while Israel still lives it will praise the Lord. The Hebrew omits *qui vivimus* (*cf.* Is. xxxviii. 19). The *Hal^e^lu-Yah* at the end of this psalm is transferred by the Septuagint (=Vulgate) to the beginning of Ps. cxiv.

PSALMS CXIV AND CXV (Hebrew cxvi)

A SONG OF THANKSGIVING

IN the Hebrew Psalms cxiv and cxv of the Vulgate Psalter appear as a single psalm, and no strong reason can be alleged against the Hebrew arrangement. The *Alleluia* at the beginning of Ps. cxv (Vulg.) is altogether absent from the Hebrew text. In verses 5 and 8 of Ps. cxv (Vulg.) we have references to vows and to thanksgiving sacrifice in the Temple. The *calix salutaris*, 'the cup of rescue' in cxv. 4 (Vulg.) also suggests the connection of the Hebrew Ps. cxvi with a sacrificial offering. It is, probably reasonable, then, to regard the Vulgate Psalms cxiv and cxv as a song chanted during, or in connection with, the public offering of a sacrifice of thanksgiving. The occasion of the offering is mentioned in verses 3 and 8. It was, apparently, the recovery of the psalmist from a dangerous illness, or his rescue from a deadly peril. In the time of illness or peril the psalmist had invoked the help of Yahweh, and had promised to the Lord a thanksgiving-offering in the event of his rescue. This psalm (cxiv–cxv) we may suppose to have been composed for use at the sacrifice which the psalmist had vowed. The psalm is at once a song of fervent thanks for favours received, and an expression of triumphant faith in the Lord. The psalmist, in deeply religious fashion, speaks of Yahweh as the 'rest' of his soul, and tells of his unshaken faith in Yahweh even at a time when he was broken with grief and affliction (cxv. 1). The deep piety and proud confidence of the psalm remind us of Ps. lxxii.

The structure of the psalm is fairly obvious.

It begins with a confession of indebtedness to Yahweh, and a promise of ceaseless thanksgiving (1–2). Then, in verses 3–4, the danger from which the psalmist had been rescued is described. The influence of Ps. xvii is manifest here.

In verses 5–7 the kindness, goodness, and justice of the Saviour, who heard the psalmist's cry for help and rescued him, are celebrated. God is, above all things, just, and His justice is seen strikingly in His care for the 'simple' (*parvuli*). The psalmist reckons himself among the 'simple,' and, therefore, he exhorts his soul to seek its rest only in the Lord.

In verses 8–9 the psalmist speaks again of the death from which Yahweh has rescued him, and of the joy which he now experiences at walking freely again in the brightness of life. In verses 10–11 (Ps. cxv. 1–2) he glances back once more at the wretchedness from

which he has been delivered, and declares that, even when things were at their worst, he had clung to his faith in Yahweh. Men had proved unreliable and hostile. They were liars all, and God alone was faithful and trustworthy. Thus his misfortunes had but purified and strengthened his faith.

In verses 12–19 (cxv. 3–10) he deals immediately with the thanksgiving sacrifice which he had vowed. Words he cannot find to express his gratitude, and so, he will raise up the cup of offering with which the ceremony of sacrifice begins, and will cry aloud the name of his Saviour—Yahweh! Yahweh is wont to be well pleased with the praise and offerings of His devoted servants (*sancti*), and therefore, suffers not lightly the slaying of any one of them. For this reason, among others, He has kept the psalmist alive. The psalmist is not an ordinary servant or slave of Yahweh: he is like the son of a slave-girl born in his Master's house, and belongs in a peculiarly intimate way to the Lord. With deepest gratitude, then, for favours received, and with intensely affectionate loyalty, he discharges his vow of thanksgiving-sacrifice before all the people, in the House of Yahweh, in the midst of Jerusalem.

The two Vulgate psalms cxiv and cxv are printed here separately for the sake of convenience.

Alleluia.	Alleluia.
1. Dilexi, quoniam exaudiet Dominus vocem orationis meæ.	1. I love the Lord, Because He hath heard my prayerful voice;
2. Quia inclinavit aurem suam mihi: et in diebus meis invocabo.	2. Because He hath bent to me His ear; I will cry out (unto Him) all my life long.
3. Circumdederunt me dolores mortis: et pericula inferni invenerunt me. Tribulationem et dolorem inveni:	3. The pains of death encompassed me, The anguish of Sheol seized upon me; Grief and sorrow I found.
4. Et nomen Domini invocavi. O Domine libera animam meam:	4. Then I called on the name of the Lord: 'O Lord, save, Thou, my life!'
5. Misericors Dominus, et justus, et Deus noster miseretur.	5. Gracious is the Lord and kind; And full of pity is our God.
6. Custodiens parvulos Dominus: humiliatus sum, et liberavit me.	6. The Lord protecteth the little ones: I was in sorrow, and He gave me help.
7. Convertere anima mea in requiem tuam: quia Dominus benefecit tibi.	7. Return, then, my soul to thy rest, For the Lord hath dealt kindly with thee.
8. Quia eripuit animam meam de morte: oculos meos a lacrimis, pedes meos a lapsu.	8. For He hath saved my soul from death, My eyes from tears, My feet from stumbling.
9. Placebo Domino in regione vivorum.	9. I shall walk before the Lord In the land of the living.

1. The *Alleluia* is from the end of the preceding psalm.

Dilexi: the Hebrew, *'ahabhti*, is also without an object. The Greek ἠγάπησα is explained by some of the Greek commentators as=εὐφράνθην, 'I rejoice.' In the translation above the *Dominus* has been transferred from the second half of the verse to the first. This arrangement is suggested by the first verse of Ps. xvii. 2: *Diligam te Domine fortitudo mea*; and Ps. xvii as will be noticed, is frequently echoed in this psalm.

Vocem orationis, 'prayerful voice.' *Cf.* Ps. v. 3.

2. *Inclinavit aurem* is a development of *exaudiet*.

In diebus meis=as long as I live.

Invocabo: Hebrew, *'eḳra'*, 'I will cry out': the words of the cry would, perhaps, be something like David's battle-cry: *M^e^hullal Yahweh, Laudandus Dominus* (Ps. xvii. 4), or, possibly, 'Him' is understood, and we should render as in the translation above. Another possibility is that the Hebrew *bimai*, 'in my days,' may be due to a misreading of a contracted form of *b^e^shem Yahweh*, 'on the name of Yahweh.'

3. We have here clear echoes of Ps. xvii. 5–7. *Dolores mortis* ought to be, as Jerome renders, *funes mortis, ḥebhle maweth*. See note on Ps. xvii. 5, 6. The expression 'cords' or 'bonds' of death suggests the idea of death as a hunter seizing his quarry.

Pericula inferni: Hebrew, *m^e^ṣare sh^e^'ol*, the anguish of Sheol: *angustiae inferni* would be a better rendering. The psalmist means here, as in Ps. xvii. 5–7, that his life was in imminent peril, that it seemed to him as if he were already entering into the netherworld, Sheol.

Invenerunt, 'overtaken,' 'seized upon.'

4. This verse seems to be connected with the preceding, thus: When I was in the perilous situation described in verse 3, I invoked the name of Yahweh saying: "O Yahweh, save my life!"

5. *Misericors et justus*: *cf.* Ps. cx. 4; cxi. 4; James v. 11.

6. *Custodiens*: 'one who guards.' The *parvuli* are the *p^e^tha'im* ('the simple') of the Hebrew text—*i.e.*, those who are unable to protect themselves, and who must, therefore, rely entirely on the protection of Yahweh. *Cf.* Matt. xi. 25.

Humiliatus sum: 'when (or, whenever) I am lowly,' or, 'if I am lowly.'

7. This is a specimen of the soliloquies with which the psalmist used to comfort himself in times of trouble. The 'rest' is God, for in God alone the psalmist can find true rest. *Cf.* Ps. xli. 6; John xiv. 27.

8–9. A quotation from Ps. lv. 13.

Eripuit: Hebrew has the second person, as in Ps. lv. *Eripuit* governs *oculos* and *pedes*, but as we cannot well say 'rescue eyes from tears,' or 'rescue feet from stumbling,' a more suitable verb

should be sought for each of these two phrases. We have here an instance of zeugma.

Placebo: the Hebrew has *'ethhallekh*, 'I will walk.' Since *hithhallekh*, 'to walk,' is used commonly in the phrase 'walk before the Lord,' and since this phrase means to please the Lord, *hithhalleklh* came to be understood by the Greek translators as meaning 'please,' 'be pleasing to.' *Cf.* Heb. xi. 5, 6; 1 Thess. iv. 1; Ephes. v. 8–10; 1 Cor. v. 7, 9; Coloss. i. 10.

In regione vivorum, 'on earth.' *Cf.* Ps. xxvi. 13.

Alleluia.

1 (10). Credidi, propter quod locutus sum: ego autem humiliatus sum nimis.
2 (11). Ego dixi in excessu meo: Omnis homo mendax.

1 (10). I was confident, even when I said:
'I am humbled indeed.'
2 (11). I said in my depression:
'Every man is a liar.'

3 (12). Quid retribuam Domino, pro omnibus, quæ retribuit mihi?
4 (13). Calicem salutaris accipiam: et nomen Domini invocabo.
5 (14). Vota mea Domino reddam coram omni populo ejus:

3 (12). How shall I make return to Yahweh
For all His benefits to me?
4 (13). The cup of rescue I will raise,
And the name of Yahweh I will cry forth.
5 (14). My vows I will pay to the Lord,
Before all His people.

6 (15). Pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus:
7 (16). O Domine quia ego servus tuus: ego servus tuus et filius ancillæ tuæ.
Dirupisti vincula mea:
8 (17). Tibi sacrificabo hostiam laudis, et nomen Domini invocabo.
9 (18). Vota mea Domino reddam in conspectu omnis populi ejus:
10 (19). In atriis domus Domini, in medio tui Jerusalem.

6 (15). Grievous in the sight of the Lord
Is the slaying of His saints.
7 (16). Yea, Lord, I am indeed Thy servant;
I am Thy servant,
The son of Thy handmaid.
My bonds Thou hast loosed.
8 (17). I will offer Thee a sacrifice of praise,
I will call upon the name of Yahweh;
9 (18). My vows I will pay to the Lord,
Before all His people,
10 (19). In the courts of Yahweh's House,
In thy midst, O Jerusalem!

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1. The *Alleluia* is absent from the Hebrew text. As explained above in the introduction to this psalm there is no convincing reason for regarding Ps. cxv of the Vulgate as independent of Ps. cxiv.

Credidi: the psalmist wishes to say that his faith in Yahweh did not fail even when he was in deepest wretchedness. Even though he complained of his griefs, he still firmly retained his trust in the Lord.

Propter quod is almost=*quando*. St. Paul in 2 Cor. iv. 13, following

the immediate meaning of the Greek, uses the phrase *Credidi, propter quod locutus sum* in the sense: 'I believe; therefore I speak.' In the context of the Psalm, however, the sense of the phrase must be, I 'believed when (or, even when) I said.'

Ego autem, etc. These are the words of complaint which he spoke in his affliction. The affliction is the same, apparently as that referred to in cxiv. 3, 8.

2 (11). *In excessu meo*: this is a quotation from Ps. xxx. 23: the Hebrew is *b^e^ḥophzi*, and this must be taken in the context not as 'in my glad surprise,' as some commentators render it, but as 'in my dismay,' or, 'in my depression.' The *excessus* was the frame of mind produced by his misfortunes.

Omnis homo mendax: *cf.* Ps. lxi. 10; Jer. xvii. 5. The psalmist means that man is essentially unreliable and deceitful when compared with God. God alone, as the psalmist had fully realised in his troubles, is faithful and true. Thus the afflictions of the psalmist had taught him that he must trust in Yahweh alone. *Cf.* Rom. iii. 4*f*.

3 (12). The favours which he has received from the Lord (including his sense of trust and confidence) are too great to be acknowledged in words.

4 (13). The *calix salutaris* is the cup which the psalmist offers to the Lord as part of the thanksgiving-offering for rescue. While the singer offers and empties the cup, he calls aloud the name of Yahweh, so that all may know that it is to Yahweh he owes his rescue.

5 (14). This verse recurs below (verse 18), and is here probably out of place.

6 (15). *Pretiosa*: the Hebrew *yaḳar* means 'heavy,' 'grievous.' This verse gives the ground of verse 13: the psalmist has thanked the Lord with fervour for the preservation of his life, and now he suggests a special reason for Yahweh's intervention on his behalf. The death of His devoted adherents is a grievous thing in the eyes of Yahweh: it is, therefore, not lightly suffered by the Lord. The Hebrew has not 'death (*mors*) of His devoted ones,' but 'slaying of His devoted ones.' The 'devoted ones' are called here *ḥ^a^sidhim*, but it is not necessary to identify them, as many modern writers do, with the Ἀσιδαῖοι of the Maccabean period.

7 (16). Probably the second *ego servus tuus* is a case of dittography. The psalmist is not an ordinary slave of Yahweh: he is a slave born in his Master's house—the son of a woman already a slave in that house. Hence he has a claim to a very special measure of his Master's affection (*cf.* Ps. lxxxv. 16). The psalmist in this comparison desires rather to emphasise his claim to Yahweh's interest than to give an exact account of his own position: he claims as much interest and affection from Yahweh as a slave born in his master's house might expect from his master. It has been suggested that the prayer contained in Ps. cxiv. 5: *Libera animam meam* should be inserted after

O Domine, the *quia* would then introduce a special reason for the Lord's intervention. It is more likely, however, that the Hebrew *ki* (*quia*) is here used to strengthen the assertion: 'I am indeed Thy servant.' The *vincula* are the perils from which the psalmist has been released.

8 (17). It is strange to speak of a 'sacrifice of praise,' but the psalmist intends thus to refer at once to the actual sacrifice offered and to his own song of thanks and praise which accompanies it.

PSALM CXVI

PRAISE YAHWEH ALL YE GENTILES

WHAT we find frequently as an introduction in other psalms—a summons to the praise of Yahweh—appears here as a complete and independent psalm. The summons is here addressed, not, as usual, to Israel, but to the heathen peoples. If the psalm was used, as it seems to have been, in the regular liturgy of the Temple, we can infer from it how familiar to Israel was the thought of the universality of Yahweh's kingdom. The heathens are called upon to praise the Lord because of His goodness towards Israel (*super nos*). This implies that they recognise the rule, and share in the worship, of Yahweh.

This outspoken universalism is obviously based on the Messianic outlook. In Rom. xv. 11 St. Paul takes the first verse of this psalm as a prophecy of the call of the Gentiles, and Theodoret sees echoes of this psalm in Tit. iii. 4–6 : Ephes. ii. 8 ; Rom. v. 8 ; xv. 8, 9. Most of the older commentators point out that the conversion of the Gentiles was due chiefly to the *misericordia* of God, whereas the conversion of the Jews, as something promised in the ancient oracles, was primarily due to the divine *Veritas*. It is scarcely necessary, however, to regard this psalm as expressing fine distinctions between the results of God's loving kindness and of His truth. Besides, the fact is that the call of the Gentiles was foretold in the ancient prophecies just as clearly as the call of the Jews—from which it should follow that God in actually calling the heathens to His Kingdom was moved thereto by His *veritas*—His loyalty to His promises. The point of the psalm does not lie in any contrast between loving-kindness and truth, but in the circumstance that the heathen are called on to glorify Yahweh because the kindness and truth of God have abounded towards the Hebrews.

Alleluia.

1. Laudate Dominum omnes Gentes : laudate eum omnes populi :
2. Quoniam confirmata est super nos misericordia ejus : et veritas Domini manet in æternum.

Alleluia.

1. Praise the Lord all ye Gentiles !
   Praise Him all ye nations !
2. For His loving kindness hath abounded upon us,
   And the truth of the Lord abideth evermore

1. The second *Laudate* renders *shabbᵉḥu*—a verb more familiar in Aramaic than in Hebrew.

2. *Confirmata* represents the Hebrew *gabhar,* 'to prevail,' 'to be strong'; this verb is used in the narrative in Genesis of the 'prevailing' of the waters of the Deluge (Gen. vii. 10–18, 20, 24); it is used also in Ps. cii. 11 of the *misericordia* of Yahweh. Perhaps the thought suggested by the word is that God's kindness and truth have swept over Israel like a mighty flood.

Super nos: if it were possible to take the summons *Laudate* as addressed by heathens to heathens (as some commentators take it) the *nos* would, of course, refer to the heathen. But the *Laudate* is naturally to be taken as spoken by God's own people. As said above in the introduction to this psalm there is no need to suppose that the *misericordia* of God is referred here especially to the Gentiles—since the *nos*=Jews—or that the *veritas* of Yahweh is here mentioned as the guiding influence in God's dealings with the Jews. God's dealings with Jews and Gentiles alike were based both on His *misericordia* and His *veritas*.

PSALM CXVII

A THANKSGIVING SONG AT TABERNACLES

FROM verses 19, 27*b*, 24, 26, it is obvious that this song was composed for use as portion of a thanksgiving ritual on some great occasion. The psalm was arranged, apparently, to be sung antiphonally, or after the fashion of a litany, by distinct groups of singers. Verse 19 shows that the first eighteen verses were intended to be sung by a procession which, starting from a point not definitely indicated in the poem, wound its way through Sion up to the south gate of the Temple and entered into the Temple Court. It is not possible to ascertain exactly how the parts of the processional song were apportioned, but some attempt has been made in the translation below to suggest how the various parts of the psalm were assigned to the different singers. When the procession enters the Temple at verse 19, the antiphonal singing is continued. At the end, the whole multitude of worshippers joins in the repetition of the theme with which the psalm begins.

In the psalm we can mark off the first four verses as an introduction. Then we can distinguish two main sections in the poem, 5–18 and 19–29. The former of these consists of two parallel sub-sections, 5–12 and 13–18, which give some idea of the historical situation from which the psalm has sprung. The central attitude of these two sub-sections is proud gladness over the good fortune which Yahweh has recently granted to His people : the Israelites feel themselves strong enough to defy the hostile peoples who dwell round about them But the present prosperity of Israel was preceded by a period of bitter trial when the hatred and jealousy of her neighbours had brought her so low that her political strength was broken, and nothing remained to her but faith in Yahweh. The memory of her humiliations only serves, however, to intensify the pride and joy of Israel in her present success, and the heart of the people is moved to deep thankfulness towards Yahweh.

In the second part of the psalm we have first a summons to the guardian of the Temple-gate (verse 19) ; and then the answer of a priest who guards the gate (20) ; then follows (21–24) the song of those who receive the procession as it enters. In these verses the wondrous delivery of Israel from her troubles is sung, and the glory of the Feast which is being celebrated is declared. A prayer for the continuance of Yahweh's gracious help is sung in verse 25, which is followed in verse 26 by a form of the High Priestly blessing : then

follows (in verse 27*b*) a summons to the sacred dance of the festival. In verse 28 we have a specimen of the song with which the worshippers accompanied their dance, and in verse 29 we hear the whole multitude joining in a repetition of the opening words of the psalm.

The Feast for which the psalm was composed cannot be determined with certainty. Whatever the first occasion of the psalm may have been, we know that it was at an early period peculiarly associated with the Feast of Tabernacles. It is possible that it was sung for the first time at the great celebration of Tabernacles described in Nehemias viii, and if that celebration of Nehemias coincided, as it may have done, with the celebration of the completion of the city walls in 444 B.C., we are justified in supposing that Psalm cxvii was at once a song of victory over the reconstruction of the walls, and a song for the Feast of Tabernacles. The cry *Hoshi 'ah-nah* of verse 25 and the 'leafy branches' of verse 27 were features of the Feast of Tabernacles (which appear together also in the Gospel-narrative of Our Lord's entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday). From Jewish tradition it is known that verse 25 :

'annah Yahweh, hoshi 'ah-na',
'annah Yahweh, haṣliḥah-na'

was sung during the Feast of Tabernacles, while the worshippers, bearing leafy branches, moved round the altar of holocausts—once a day on the first six days of the Feast, and six times on the seventh day. This seventh day was known as *Yom Hosha'na'*, 'the Day of Hosanna,' and the branches carried by the people on the seventh day were also called *Hosha'na'* (*cf.* the Tract Sukka iv. 14, 30*b*.). As the last psalm of the Hallel, Ps. cxvii was, of course, sung at the Pasch. The nearness of Pasch and the use of the leafy branches at Our Lord's entry into Jerusalem, would both suggest to the multitude the cry Hosanna (=*hoshi'ah-na'*). It is interesting to note that, in the same chapter of the Gospel (Matt. xxi) which describes the solemn entry of Christ into the Holy City, we find Our Lord quoting against the Pharisees, verses 22–23 of Ps. cxvii.

Alleluia	Alleluia. (Introduction)
1. Confitemini Domino quoniam bonus : quoniam in sæculum misericordia ejus.	1. Thank the Lord, for He is good ! Yea, His kindness abideth for ever.
2. Dicat nunc Israel quoniam bonus : quoniam in sæculum misericordia ejus.	2. Thus let Israel say : Yea, for ever abideth His kindness !
3. Dicat nunc domus Aaron : quoniam in sæculum misericordia ejus.	3. Thus let the House of Aaron say : Yea, for ever abideth His kindness !
4. Dicant nunc qui timent Dominum : quoniam in sæculum misericordia ejus.	4. Thus let them that fear the Lord say : Yea, forever abideth His kindness.

5. De tribulatione invocavi Dominum : et exaudivit me in latitudine Dominus.
6. Dominus mihi adjutor non timebo quid faciat mihi homo.
7. Dominus mihi adjutor : et ego despiciam inimicos meos.

8. Bonum est confidere in Domino, quam confidere in homine:
9. Bonum est sperare in Domino, quam sperare in principibus.

10. Omnes Gentes circuierunt me : et in nomine Domini quia ultus sum in eos.
11. Circumdantes circumdederunt me : et in nomine Domini quia ultus sum in eos.
12. Circumdederunt me sicut apes, et exarserunt sicut ignis in spinis : et in nomine Domini quia ultus sum in eos.

13. Impulsus eversus sum ut caderem : et Dominus suscepit me.
14. Fortitudo mea, et laus mea Dominus : et factus est mihi in salutem.
15. Vox exsultationis, et salutis in tabernaculis justorum.
16. Dextera Domini fecit virtutem : dextera Domini exaltavit me, dextera Domini fecit virtutem.

17. Non moriar, sed vivam : et narrabo opera Domini.
18. Castigans castigavit me Dominus : et morti non tradidit me.

19. Aperite mihi portas justitiæ, ingressus in eas confitebor Domino :

20. Hæc porta Domini, justi intrabunt in eam.

21. Confitebor tibi quoniam exaudisti me : et factus es mihi in salutem.

[During the procession]
(First choir)
5. Out of sore need I called to the Lord ;
The Lord heard me and rescued me.

6. The Lord is my Helper—I fear not :
What can man do against me ?

7. The Lord is my Helper—
I see my desire on my foes.

(Second choir)
8. It is better to trust in the Lord
Than to trust in men.
9. It is better to trust in the Lord
Than to trust in princes.

(First choir)
10. All the Gentiles encompassed me ;
In the name of Yahweh I destroyed them :
11. They encompassed and engirt me ;
In the name of Yahweh I destroyed them ;
12. They swarmed around me like bees,
And burned like fire among thorns ;
In the name of Yahweh I destroyed them.

(Second choir)
13. I was thrust off that I should fall ;
But the Lord protected me.

14. My strength and my song is the Lord ;
He hath become my deliverance.

15. Voices of jubilee and victory
Are in the tents of the just.
16. The right hand of Yahweh hath exercised power ;
The right hand of Yahweh hath delivered me ;
The right hand of Yahweh hath exercised power.
17. I shall not die but live,
And rehearse the deeds of the Lord ;
18. The Lord hath chastened me sorely ;
But to death He hath not abandoned me.

(Singer before the gate of the Temple)
19. Open to me the gates of justice :
I will enter by them and give thanks to Yahweh !

(Voice of a priest)
20. This is the gate of Yahweh :
The just alone enter thereat !

(Song at the entrance of procession)
21. I give Thee thanks for Thou hast heard me.
And art become my deliverance.

22. Lapidem, quem reprobaverunt ædificantes : hic factus est in caput anguli.
23. A Domino factum est istud : et est mirabile in oculis nostris.
24. Hæc est dies, quam fecit Dominus : exsultemus, et lætemur in ea.

25. O Domine salvum me fac, o Domine, bene prosperare :

26. Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Benediximus vobis de domo Domini :

27. Deus Dominus, et illuxit nobis.

Constituite diem solemnem in condensis, usque ad cornu altaris.

28. Deus meus es tu, et confitebor tibi : Deus meus es tu, et exaltabo te.
Confitebor tibi quoniam exaudisti me : et factus es mihi in salutem.

29. Confitemini Domino quoniam bonus : quoniam in sæculum misericordia ejus.

22. The stone which the builders rejected,
Is become the corner-stone :

23. This is the work of the Lord :
It is marvellous in our eyes !

24. This is the Day which the Lord hath made !
Let us rejoice and be glad therein !

(A prayer)
25. Save me, O Lord :
O Lord, grant me success !

(Blessing)
26. Blessed in the name of Yahweh
Is he that cometh.
We give you blessing—
We who belong to the House of Yahweh.
27. Yahweh is God and He giveth us light !

(Summons to the sacred dance)
Marshal the festive dance with leafy branches,
(That reach) even unto the altar-horns.

(Song of the dancers)
28. Thou art my God, I give Thee thanks
Thou art my God, I extol Thee !
I give Thee thanks because Thou hast heard me,
And art become my deliverance.

(The people)
29. Thank the Lord, for He is good !
Yea, His kindness abideth for ever !

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1. *Cf.* Ps. cv. 1 ; cvi. 1 ; cxxxv. The threefold grouping of the worshippers is the same as in Ps. cxiii. 17–19. We must regard these introductory verses as sung after the fashion of a litany. There is first the general declaration of the duty of giving thanks to Yahweh because of His kindness : this is supposed to be repeated by each of the three groups, and the people generally answer in each case, ' Yea, His kindness abideth for aye ! ' The answer of the people is like the recurrence of the petition in a litany. The *quoniam* does not suitably reproduce the sense of the Hebrew : the Hebrew *ki* here means something like ' yea,' or ' verily.'

2. ' House of Israel ' : the Massoretic text omits ' House.' The *quoniam bonus* of verse 2 is not found in the Hebrew : it is an addition based on verse 1.

5. We can see that here and in the following verses there is not question of an individual, but of the community. An individual

could not speak of himself as hemmed in by the nations round about. Moreover, it is only a nation, and not an individual, that can be said not to die. Besides, it is clear from the whole context that the psalm was sung by a multitude, by the members of a procession. It is, therefore, a communal psalm, and it is the joys and sorrows of Israel as a people that it celebrates. The sorrow from which Israel has been rescued is, in the first instance, the Babylonian Exile, and secondarily, the perils that threatened her existence during the century that immediately followed the Exile.

Exaudivit in latitudine : Hebrew, 'With spaciousness He answered me,' *i.e.*, God rescued Israel from the straitness of the Exile and the troubles which followed it, and led her out, as it were, into the spaciousness of freedom. 'Wideness,' 'spaciousness'=absence of restraint; *cf.* Ps. xvii. 20 : *Eduxit me in latitudinem*, and Ps. cxviii. 45 : *Ambulabam in latitudine.* Compare for the same idea Ps. xxx. 9 : *Conclusisti me in manibus inimici : statuisti in loco spatioso pedes meos. Exaudivit in latitudine* is pregnant for : *Exaudivit me, et statuit me in loco spatioso.* It is interesting to note that the Hebrew text of this psalm uses frequently the form *Yah* for the divine name, instead of *Yahweh.*

6. *Mihi adjutor* : the Massoretic text has nothing corresponding to adjutor. 6*b* recalls Ps. lv. 5, 11.

7. *Despiciam* : Hebrew, *'er'eh*, 'I shall see my pleasure on,' *i.e.*, I shall have the satisfaction of seeing their failure. Israel rejoices at the defeat of her foes not merely from feelings of vindictiveness, but also because their defeat is the overthrow of the enemies of Yahweh Himself.

8, 9. The reference in 'princes' may possibly be to King Artaxerxes who had given permission for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. In spite of that permission the Jewish people had been violently opposed in their project of reconstruction by the surrounding peoples, so that they might well say that trust in princes was futile.

10. Verses 10–12 seem to refer to the efforts made by the neighbours of the Jews round about to prevent the restoration of Jerusalem. The people who 'engirt Israel' are probably to be identified with those spoken of in Nehemias ii. 19 ; iv. 1*f.* : Samaritans, Ammonites, Arabians, etc. In spite of all the hostility and mockery of their neighbours the Judeans, relying on the help of Yahweh, had succeeded in rebuilding the walls of their city. Verses 10–12 contain a thrice repeated cry of victory over their achievement.

11. *Quia ultus sum* : the *quia* (to which nothing corresponds here in the Septuagint) is to be taken like the *quoniam* of verses 1–4 : it is a literal translation of *ki*, which is an asseverative particle. *Ultus sum in eos* renders the Hebrew *'amilam*, the meaning of which is uncertain. The Syriac renders it : 'I extirpated them.' 'Avenged myself upon them' is scarcely strong enough in the con-

text. The Hebrew imperfect *'amilam* implies that the repression of the enemy continues even in the present.

In nomine Domini: trusting in Yahweh, and invoking His name.

12. For the imagery of the swarm of bees compare Deut. i. 44 and Is. vii. 18. As bees swarm round the honey-comb, and as fire burns in well dried brambles—so eager and violent was the attack of the foes. The Hebrew, *do'akhu k'esh ḳoṣim*, ought to be rendered, 'They were extinguished like a fire among thorns,' but as this is not suitable in the context, we read with the Septuagint *ba'aru*, 'they burned, etc.,' instead of *do'akhu* 'they were extinguished.'

13. The Hebrew here has the second person: 'Thou didst thrust me away'—the hostile peoples being directly addressed. The Septuagint translators read *nidḥethi, eversus sum* instead of the Massoretic *d'ḥithani*, 'thou didst cast me hence.' *Impulsus* represents the infinitive absolute *daḥoh*: this combined with *d'ḥithani* would be normally rendered: 'Overthrowing thou didst overthrow me.'

Ut caderem: the aim of their foes was to bring about the absolute ruin of the Jews. But the help of Yahweh frustrated the plans of the enemies.

14. *Cf.* Exod. xv. 2; Is. xii. 2. *Laus mea*=theme of my song of praise.

15. The cries of joy and victory are the songs which are being actually sung by the members of the procession as they approach the Temple. The 'just' are, of course, the Israelites.

16. Here are some of the actual *voces exultationis*. *Me* is not in the Hebrew. Here, as in verses 1–4, 8–9, 10–12, we must suppose a chant carried on like a litany.

17. Israel is now confident that she will long survive to publish the great deeds of Yahweh: her survival itself will be a wonderful token of Yahweh's power.

18. Israel now sees clearly that her recent troubles were intended to instruct and discipline her, and not to bring about her destruction. *Castigans castigavit* is the same construction as that referred to in the note to verse 13. *Cf.* Jer. xxx. 11.

19. The procession has reached the gate of the Temple. The Temple-gates are 'gates of justice' because by them one entered into justice, *i.e.*, salvation (*cf.* Jer. xxxi. 23).

20. The words of a priest, or Levite, who guards the gate. Those who enter are reminded that only the 'just' may enter in through the 'gates of justice.' With verses 19–20 should be compared Ps. xxiii. 3–6, where a similar situation is presupposed.

21. The procession passes in through the gate and the *voces exultationis* are still heard.

22. *Cf.* Jer. li. 26: speaking of the destruction of Babel the prophet says: 'From thee shall none take a stone for a corner-stone

or a foundation-stone: a waste place thou shalt remain for ever.' Israel, which, like her city and her Temple, had been cast into ruins, is now raised up again and given a decisive religious and political importance: she will be the corner-stone, so to speak, in the Kingdom of God—the Messianic Kingdom which is here thought of, as in Matt. xvi. as a building. In that building Sion (=Israel) will be the corner-stone ('head of the corner')—the stone, therefore, which, as completing the outermost edge of the wall, is a key-stone in the structure. Our Lord applies the verse to Himself in Matt. xxi. 42. As has been frequently pointed out in this commentary the fortunes of Israel are, for the most part, typical of the career of the Messias. He should resume in Himself all that was great and good and tragic and heroic in the history of Israel. Hence, as Israel was despised and rejected by her heathen neighbours though she was destined to play a chief part in the Kingdom of God, so was Jesus, the divinely appointed corner-stone of the building of the Messianic Kingdom, rejected with contempt by the leaders of Israel. The 'builders' in the context of the psalm have no particular significance: they are intended simply to complete the picture. In the verse as used by Jesus, the 'builders' might be regarded as the would-be builders of God's Kingdom—the narrow-minded and misguided Jewish teachers of Our Lord's time.

The raising up of Israel out of ruin and impotence to power and importance might well be called 'wonderful'—just as the triumph of Jesus over His apparently victorious adversaries was divinely wonderful.

23. But it was God alone who wrought the wonder in both cases. Compare Nehem. vi. 16.

24. Yahweh has supplied the occasion of the Feast by His help.

25. The prayer here refers primarily, it would seem, to the festival that is being celebrated; but it is probably also implied that Israel will need for her future a steady continuance of the help she has hitherto received. As has been said already, the cry *Salvum fac*—*Hoshi 'ah-na'*, was peculiarly associated with the Feast of Tabernacles.

Benedictus qui venit, etc.; the Hebrew accents indicate that the sense is: 'Blessed in the name of Yahweh is he that cometh': the name of Yahweh was pronounced in the formula of blessing. Compare the typical priestly blessing, Num. vi. 24–26:

> 'May Yahweh bless thee and guard thee;
> May Yahweh make His face to shine on thee and be gracious to thee;
> May Yahweh lift up His face upon thee and give thee peace!'

This was the usual formula of the High Priestly blessing, as prescribed by the words (Num. vi. 27): 'So shall they put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.' A blessing like this was invoked on the worshippers, and it was spoken by a priest representing the

priests of the Temple. *Qui venit*=the procession at its arrival, and *vobis*=the members of the procession.

27. *Deus Dominus*='Yahweh is God'; here the rendering 'The Lord is God' would be quite unsatisfactory.

Illuxit nobis is an echo of the words of blessing just quoted. Yahweh has been a light to the Israelites to lead them forth from their troubles, just as He had been a pillar of fire to lead forth Israel from Egypt.

In 27*b*, the people are summoned to join in the festival-dance as an act of thanksgiving for the favours they have received from Yahweh. *Dies solemnis* renders the Hebrew *ḥagh*—a word which meant primarily a sacred dance, or cult-dance (*cf.* Exod. xiii. 6). Corresponding to *consituite* we have in the Hebrew *'isru*, which can mean 'marshal,' 'set in order'—so that *constituite* is a sufficiently accurate rendering. *In condensis*, 'with thick (or, leafy) branches,' translates correctly *la'ᵃbhothim*. The whole phrase means then, probably: 'Arrange (or, begin) the cult-dance with waving of branches even up to the altar-horn'; the immediate reference is probably to the encircling of the altar of Holocausts by the branch-waving multitude during the Feast of Tabernacles. Jerome's rendering,

Frequentate sollemnitatem in frondosis
usque ad cornu altaris

reproduces with fair accuracy the meaning of the original. For 'thick (or 'leafy') branches' as the meaning of *'ᵃbhothim* see Ezech. xix. 11. Lev. xxiii. 39*ff.*, speaking of the solemnising of Tabernacles refers definitely to the 'branches' to be carried by the people. The branches were reached towards the altar as the people moved round in the sacred dance, and were made to touch the horns of the altar. See the tract Sukka, iv. 5.

28. Here again, as in verse 14, we have echoes of the Song of Moses, Exod. xv. 2.

29. The multitude joins in repeating the first verse of the psalm.

PSALM CXVIII

THE PRAISE OF THE LAW

THIS psalm consists of twenty-two stanzas, or strophes, of eight verses each. The stanzas are so constructed that all the verses in each begin with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and the letters follow in the psalm the order of that alphabet. There are, thus, in all twenty-two strophes. That there are eight verses in each strophe is due, probably, to the circumstance that the Law was known familiarly under eight chief designations (many, or according to David Müller, all, of which are used in the remarkable hymn on the Torah in Ps. xviii. 8*ff*.). These epithets, or designations, were *'imrah* (utterance), *dabhar* (word), *ḥuḳḳim* (precepts), *miṣwoth* (commands), *mishp*^{e}*tim* (judgments), *'edhoth*, (testimonies), *piḳḳudhim* (behests), *Torah* (Law, instruction). These eight epithets all actually occur in several stanzas of the psalm, and it is possible (and, according to some authorities, even probable) that in the primitive text of our psalm all these eight names of the Law occurred in every stanza.

Though the psalm is so long, its alphabetical arrangement and the grouping of each strophe around standing epithets of the Law made it suitable for learning by heart. Verse 9 has been taken as suggesting that Ps. cxviii may have been used as a sort of *Vade mecum* for young Israelites. There are few continuous passages in the psalm, and there is no definite progress of thought either in the poem generally or within the individual stanzas. Though the psalm may have been intended as a sort of brief manual of Hebrew piety and philosophy for young Israelites, it is composed from the point of view of the nation, not from that of the individual. It is obviously not against any private Israelite, but against the nation, that princes rise up in hostility (23, 161) : only the nation could be spoken of as almost annihilated in the land (87) ; it is the nation Israel that is poor and despised (141), that wanders in the world like a lost sheep (176). Of Israel, rather than of any individual, was it true that the Law kept it alive (73)—for it was the Law that maintained the separate individuality of Israel during the Exile. In its Law the Hebrew people generally had a deeper and truer philosophy, and theory of life than any that was known to the Gentiles (98, 99)—and it was the conciousness of possessing the truth on fundamental matters that gave the nation courage to speak without fear before the heathen kings who oppressed it (46).

The psalm represents Israel as having endured much mockery and many other trials (22, 25, 28, 39, 41, 49, 83–86, 92, 107, etc.). While the foes of Israel appear mostly as heathens (95, 109, 110, etc.), there are among them also renegade Jews (21, 53, 113, 115, 118, 126, 139, etc.). The Jew living in the midst of a Gentile community was of necessity a marked individual. His beliefs and practices cut him off largely from intercourse with his Gentile contemporaries, and earned for him frequently their mockery and contempt. It is well known that in the Hellenistic period, many Jews were induced, partly by the desire to escape the mockery of the Gentiles, and partly by the attractiveness of heathen philosophy, to abandon their national beliefs, and join the Gentiles in mocking the strict followers of the Law. Such backslidings among the Jews did not begin, we may be sure, in the Hellenistic period; they must have been as old as the first extensive contact of Judaism with forms of Western thought. The author of this psalm was fully alive to the dangerous attractiveness of heathen speculation for his Jewish brethren, but he himself has nothing but contempt for heathen teachers (99). For him the Torah of Yahweh is the highest thought—in depth and beauty far beyond all merely human philosophy; and he proudly declares his unwavering allegiance thereto. The vehement and well-informed Hebrew thinker who composed this enthusiastic defence and glorification of the Law was, in all probability, moved to write it by the encroachments of heathen thought among the Jews; and we can well imagine how industriously the psalmist's associates and the strongly nationalist Jews of later times must have used the words of this poem to arm their young countrymen against the seductions of foreign thought.

Alleluia.

1. Beati immaculati in via: qui ambulant in lege Domini.
2. Beati, qui scrutantur testimonia ejus: in toto corde exquirunt eum.
3. Non enim qui operantur iniquitatem, in viis ejus ambulaverunt.
4. Tu mandasti mandata tua custodiri nimis.
5. Utinam dirigantur viæ meæ, ad custodiendas justificationes tuas!
6. Tunc non confundar, cum perspexero in omnibus mandatis tuis.
7. Confitebor tibi in directione cordis: in eo quod didici judicia justitiæ tuæ.

Alleluia.

'Aleph

1. Happy are the stainless in life's way,
   Who walk in the Law of Yahweh.
2. Happy are they who keep His decrees,
   Who seek Him with all their heart:
3. For they who sin
   Walk not on His paths.
4. Thou hast enjoined Thy decrees,
   That they may be zealously observed.
5. O that my ways were well guided,
   To the keeping of Thy laws;
6. Then I shall not be put to shame,
   When I look on all Thy commandments.
7. I will thank Thee with a heart sincere,
   When I learn Thy just decrees.

8. Justificationes tuas custodiam: non me derelinquas usquequaque.

8. Thy laws I will keep;
Do not wholly forsake me!

Beth

9. In quo corrigit adolescentior viam suam? in custodiendo sermones tuos.
10. In toto corde meo exquisivi te: ne repellas me a mandatis tuis.
11. In corde meo abscondi eloquia tua: ut non peccem tibi.
12. Benedictus es Domine: doce me justificationes tuas.
13. In labiis meis, pronuntiavi omnia judicia oris tui.
14. In via testimoniorum tuorum delectatus sum, sicut in omnibus divitiis.
15. In mandatis tuis exercebor: et considerabo vias tuas.
16. In justificationibus tuis meditabor: non obliviscar sermones tuos.

9. 'Whereby doth a youth keep pure his way?'
By heeding Thy words!
10. With my whole heart I seek Thee;
Thrust me not off from Thy laws.
11. In my heart I treasure Thy oracles,
That I may not sin against Thee.
12. Praised be Thou, Lord!
Teach me Thy decrees.
13. With my lips I recount
All the judgments of Thy mouth.
14. In the way of Thy precepts I rejoice,
As in fulness of riches.
15. On Thy decrees I will ponder;
Thy paths I will regard.
16. In Thy laws I find pleasure,
I forget not Thy words.

Gimel

17. Retribue servo tuo, vivifica me: et custodiam sermones tuos.
18. Revela oculos meos: et considerabo mirabilia de lege tua.
19. Incola ego sum in terra: non abscondas a me mandata tua.
20. Concupivit anima mea desiderare justificationes tuas, in omni tempore.
21. Increpasti superbos: maledicti qui declinant a mandatis tuis.
22. Aufer a me opprobrium, et contemptum: quia testimonia tua exquisivi.
23. Etenim sederunt principes, et adversum me loquebantur: servus autem tuus exercebatur in justificationibus tuis.
24. Nam et testimonia tua meditatio mea est: et consilium meum justificationes tuæ.

17. Deal kindly with Thy servant that I may live,
And I will keep Thy words.
18. Unveil my eyes that I may behold
The wondrous things of Thy law.
19. I am a stranger on earth;
Hide not from me Thy commands.
20. My soul pineth with longing
For Thy decrees evermore.
21. Thou threatenest the arrogant;
Accursed are they who desert Thy commands.
22. Take from me shame and contempt,
Because I keep Thy decrees.
23. Let princes sit together and speak against me:
Thy servant thinks only of Thy laws.
24. For Thy commands are my delight,
And Thy decrees are my counsellors.

Daleth

25. Adhæsit pavimento anima mea: vivifica me secundum verbum tuum.
26. Vias meas enuntiavi, et exaudisti me: doce me justificationes tuas.
27. Viam justificationum tuarum instrue me: et exercebor in mirabilibus tuis.

25. My soul cleaveth to the dust:
Quicken me according to Thy word.
26. My ways I rehearsed to Thee and Thou heardest me;
Teach me Thy precepts!
27. Instruct me in the way of Thy decrees,
And I will ponder on Thy wonders.

28. Dormitavit anima mea præ tædio: confirma me in verbis tuis.
29. Viam iniquitatis amove a me: et de lege tua miserere mei.

28. My soul is weary from trouble;
Strengthen me by Thy words!

29. The way of evil put far from me,
And with Thy Torah graciously favour me!

30. Viam veritatis elegi: judicia tua non sum oblitus.
31. Adhæsi testimoniis tuis, Domine: noli me confundere.
32. Viam mandatorum tuorum cucurri, cum dilatasti cor meum.

30. The way of truth I have chosen;
I forget not Thy judgments.
31. I cling to Thy testimonies, O Lord;
Let me not be brought to shame!
32. I run the way of Thy commands;
For Thou widenest my heart.

He

33. Legem pone mihi Domine viam justificationum tuarum: et exquiram eam semper.
34. Da mihi intellectum, et scrutabor legem tuam: et custodiam illam in toto corde meo.
35. Deduc me in semitam mandatorum tuorum: quia ipsam volui.
36. Inclina cor meum in testimonia tua: et non in avaritiam.
37. Averte oculos meos ne videant vanitatem: in via tua vivifica me.
38. Statue servo tuo eloquium tuum, in timore tuo.
39. Amputa opprobrium meum quod suspicatus sum: quia judicia tua jucunda.
40. Ecce concupivi mandata tua: in æquitate tua vivifica me.

33. Make my norm, O Lord, the way of Thy precepts,
And I will steadfastly keep it.
34. Give me understanding that I may keep Thy law,
And observe it with all my heart.
35. Lead me on the way of Thy commands,
For therein is my pleasure.
36. Bend my heart to Thy testimonies,
And not unto avarice.
37. Turn away my eyes that they see not vanity:
By Thy way give me life!
38. Fulfil Thy word to Thy servant,
Because of His fear of Thee.
39. Take away my shame which I fear,
For Thy judgments are good.
40. Behold I long for Thy commands.
By Thy justice give me life!

Vau

41. Et veniat super me misericordia tua Domine: salutare tuum secundum eloquium tuum.
42. Et respondebo exprobrantibus mihi verbum: quia speravi in sermonibus tuis.
43. Et ne auferas de ore meo verbum veritatis usquequaque: quia in judiciis tuis supersperavi.
44. Et custodiam legem tuam semper: in sæculum et in sæculum sæculi.
45. Et ambulabam in latitudine: quia mandata tua exquisivi.
46. Et loquebar in testimoniis tuis in conspectu regum: et non confundebar.
47. Et meditabar in mandatis tuis, quæ dilexi.
48. Et levavi manus meas ad mandata tua, quæ dilexi: et exercebar in justificationibus tuis.

41. Let Thy favour come upon me, O Lord!
And Thy help, according to Thy word.
42. So shall I have an answer for them that mock me,
For I trust in Thy words.
43. Take not ever the word of truth from my mouth,
For I greatly trust in Thy judgments.
44. I observe Thy law
For ever and ever!
45. Thus shall I walk on a wide path,
For I seek Thy precepts.
46. I will speak of Thy testimonies before princes,
And I shall not be ashamed.
47. I will ponder over Thy commands,
Which I love.
48. I will raise up my hands to Thy commands (which I love),
And I will ponder on Thy precepts.

49. Memor esto verbi tui servo tuo, in quo mihi spem dedisti.
50. Hæc me consolata est in humilitate mea : quia eloquium tuum vivificavit me.
51. Superbi inique agebant usquequaque : a lege autem tua non declinavi.
52. Memor fui judiciorum tuorum a sæculo Domine : et consolatus sum.
53. Defectio tenuit me, pro peccatoribus derelinquentibus legem tuam.
54. Cantabiles mihi erant justificationes tuæ, in loco peregrinationis meæ.
55. Memor fui nocte nominis tui Domine : et custodivi legem tuam.
56. Hæc facta est mihi : quia justificationes tuas exquisivi.

57. Portio mea Domine, dixi custodire legem tuam.
58. Deprecatus sum faciem tuam in toto corde meo : miserere mei secundum eloquium tuum.
59. Cogitavi vias meas : et converti pedes meos in testimonia tua.
60. Paratus sum, et non sum turbatus : ut custodiam mandata tua.
61. Funes peccatorum circumplexi sunt me : et legem tuam non sum oblitus.
62. Media nocte surgebam ad confitendum tibi, super judicia justificationis tuæ.
63. Particeps ego sum omnium timentium te : et custodientium mandata tua.
64. Misericordia tua Domine plena est terra : justificationes tuas doce me.

65. Bonitatem fecisti cum servo tuo Domine, secundum verbum tuum.
66. Bonitatem, et disciplinam, et scientiam doce me : quia mandatis tuis credidi.
67. Priusquam humiliarer ego deliqui : propterea eloquium tuum custodivi.
68. Bonus es tu : et in bonitate tua doce me justificationes tuas.

Zayin

49. Remember Thy word to Thy servant,
Wherewith Thou hast given me hope.
50. This is my comfort in my wretchedness,
That Thy utterance maketh me to live.

51. The arrogant act always godlessly,
But I swerve not from Thy law.

52. I remember Thy judgments of old, O Lord,
And I am comforted.
53. Indignation seizeth me because of the sinners,
Who abandon Thy Law
54. Themes of song are to me Thy decrees,
Where'er I sojourn.

55. I think in the night of Thy name, O Yahweh,
And Thy Torah I keep.
56. This is my lot
That I keep Thy decrees.

Heth

57. My portion, I say it, O Lord,
Is to keep Thy Law.
58. I beg Thy favour with my whole heart ;
Be gracious to me according to Thy word.

59. I think over my ways,
And turn my feet towards Thy decrees.

60. I stand ready and undismayed,
To fulfil Thy commands.

61. Cords of the wicked wrap me round,
But I forget not Thy law.

62. At midnight I rise to praise Thee,
Because of Thy just judgments.

63. I am a friend of all who fear Thee,
Of those who keep Thy commands.

64. The earth, O Lord, is full of Thy goodness :
Teach me Thy precepts.

Teth

65. Thou hast shown kindness to Thy servant, O Lord,
According to Thy word.
66 Teach me goodness, restraint, and wisdom,
For I believe in Thy commands.
67. Before I suffered I had sinned,
Therefore I now keep Thy law.

68. Thou art good, and in Thy goodness
Teach me Thy statutes.

69. Multiplicata est super me iniquitas superborum: ego autem in toto corde meo scrutabor mandata tua.
70. Coagulatum est sicut lac cor eorum: ego vero legem tuam meditatus sum.
71. Bonum mihi quia humiliasti me: ut discam justificationes tuas.
72. Bonum mihi lex oris tui, super millia auri et argenti.

69. The malice of the godless hath increased against me,
But I search Thy laws with my whole heart.
70. Curdled like milk is their heart;
But I delight in Thy law.
71. It was good for me that Thou humbledst me,
That I might learn Thy decrees.
72. The law of Thy mouth is dearer to me
Than thousands of gold and silver.

Yod

73. Manus tuæ fecerunt me, et plasmaverunt me: da mihi intellectum, et discam mandata tua.
74. Qui timent te videbunt me, et lætabuntur: quia in verba tua supersperavi.
75. Cognovi Domine quia æquitas judicia tua: et in veritate tua humiliasti me.
76. Fiat misericordia tua ut consoletur me, secundum eloquium tuum servo tuo.
77. Veniant mihi miserationes tuæ, et vivam: quia lex tua meditatio mea est.
78. Confundantur superbi, quia injuste iniquitatem fecerunt in me: ego autem exercebor in mandatis tuis.
79. Convertantur mihi timentes te: et qui noverunt testimonia tua.
80. Fiat cor meum immaculatum in justificationibus tuis, ut non confundar.

73. Thy hands have made me and fashioned me;
Give me insight to learn Thy commands!
74. Thy fearers will see me and rejoice,
For I have hoped firmly in Thy words.
75. I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are just,
And that Thou humblest me because of Thy truth:
76. Let Thy favour comfort me,
According to Thy promise to Thy servant.
77. Let Thy pity come upon me, that I may live,
For Thy law is my delight.
78. Let the arrogant be put to shame,
For unjustly they do evil against me;
But I ponder over Thy precepts.
79. Let those who fear Thee turn to me,
And those who know Thy decrees.
80. Let my heart be blameless in Thy precepts,
That I may not be disgraced.

Kaph

81. Defecit in salutare tuum anima mea: et in verbum tuum supersperavi.
82. Defecerunt oculi mei in eloquium tuum, dicentes: Quando consolaberis me?
83. Quia factus sum sicut uter in pruina: justificationes tuas non sum oblitus.
84. Quot sunt dies servi tui? quando facies de persequentibus me judicium?
85. Narraverunt mihi iniqui fabulationes: sed non ut lex tua.
86. Omnia mandata tua veritas: inique persecuti sunt me, adjuva me.

81. My soul pineth for Thy salvation,
I put my Hope in Thy word.
82. My eyes long for Thy word:
They say: 'When wilt Thou comfort me?'
83. I have become like a wine-skin in hoar-frost:
But Thy decrees I forget not.
84. How many are still the days of Thy servant?
When wilt Thou hold trial on my persecutors?
85. The godless tell me idle tales,
Which are not like Thy law.
86. All Thy commands are truth:
Unjustly those pursue me: help me!

87. Paulo minus consummaverunt me in terra : ego autem non dereliqui mandata tua.
88. Secundum misericordiam tuam vivifica me : et custodiam testimonia oris tui.

87. They had well nigh made an end of me in the land :
But I abandoned not Thy commands.
88. In Thy kindness make me live,
And I will keep the decrees of Thy mouth.

Lamed

89. In æternum Domine, verbum tuum permanet in cœlo.
90. In generationem et generationem veritas tua : fundasti terram, et permanet.
91. Ordinatione tua perseverat dies : quoniam omnia serviunt tibi.
92. Nisi quod lex tua meditatio mea est : tunc forte periissem in humilitate mea.
93. In æternum non obliviscar justificationes tuas : quia in ipsis vivificasti me.
94. Tuus sum ego, salvum me fac : quoniam justificationes tuas exquisivi.
95. Me exspectaverunt peccatores ut perderent me : testimonia tua intellexi.
96. Omnis consummationis vidi finem : latum mandatum tuum nimis.

89. For ever, O Lord, is Thy word :
It abideth in heaven.
90. From age unto age is Thy truth :
Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.
91. By Thy decree it abideth until now :
For all things do Thee service.

92. Were Thy law not my delight,
I had come to nought in my misery.

93. I will never forget Thy laws ;
By them Thou givest me life.

94. I am Thine : help me !
For I study Thy precepts.

95. The wicked lie in wait for me to destroy me,
But to Thy decrees I give heed.
96. An end to all perfection I have seen ;
But Thy Law is without end.

Mem

97. Quomodo dilexi legem tuam Domine ? tota die meditatio mea est.
98. Super inimicos meos prudentem me fecisti mandato tuo : quia in æternum mihi est.
99. Super omnes docentes me intellexi : quia testimonia tua meditatio mea est.
100. Super senes intellexi : quia mandata tua quæsivi.
101. Ab omni via mala prohibui pedes meos : ut custodiam verba tua.
102. A judiciis tuis non declinavi : quia tu legem posuisti mihi.
103. Quam dulcia faucibus meis eloquia tua, super mel ori meo !
104. A mandatis tuis intellexi : propterea odivi omnem viam iniquitatis.

97. How dearly I love Thy law, O Lord !
All the day it is my thought.

98. Thou makest me wiser than my foes by Thy law :
For it abideth with me for ever.
99. Insight I have, more than my teachers,
For Thy testimonies are my thought.

100. I am wiser than the elders,
Because I keep Thy commands.
101. From every evil way I have kept my feet,
That I might heed only Thy words.
102. From Thy ordinances I have swerved not,
For Thou hast given me instruction.
103. How sweet are Thy words to my palate !
Sweeter than honey to my mouth !

104. Through Thy commands I grow wise ;
Therefore I hate every way of falsehood.

Nun

105. Lucerna pedibus meis verbum tuum, et lumen semitis meis.
106. Juravi, et statui custodire judicia justitiæ tuæ.

105. Thy word is a lamp to my feet,
And a light on my path.

106. I have sworn—and will keep it—
To observe Thy commands.

107. Humiliatus sum usque-quaque Domine: vivifica me secundum verbum tuum.
108. Voluntaria oris mei beneplacita fac Domine: et judicia tua doce me.
109. Anima mea in manibus meis semper: et legem tuam non sum oblitus.
110. Posuerunt peccatores laqueum mihi: et de mandatis tuis non erravi.
111. Hæreditate acquisivi testimonia tua in æternum: quia exsultatio cordis mei sunt.
112. Inclinavi cor meum ad faciendas justificationes tuas in æternum, propter retributionem.

107. I am greatly humbled:
Quicken me, Lord, according to Thy word!
108. Let the free-will offerings of my mouth please Thee, Lord:
And teach me Thy decrees.
109. My life is ever in my hands;
But I forget not Thy law.
110. The wicked set snares for me;
But I swerve not from Thy precepts.
111. Thy decrees I hold as a heritage for ever;
They are truly the joy of my heart.
112. I turn my heart to do Thy commands;
Everlasting is the reward.

Samekh

113. Iniquos odio habui: et legem tuam dilexi.
114. Adjutor et susceptor meus es tu: et in verbum tuum supersperavi.
115. Declinate a me maligni: et scrutabor mandata Dei mei.
116. Suscipe me secundum eloquium tuum, et vivam: et non confundas me ab exspectatione mea.
117. Adjuva me, et salvus ero: et meditabor in justificationibus tuis semper.
118. Sprevisti omnes discedentes a judiciis tuis: quia injusta cogitatio eorum.
119. Prævaricantes reputav- omnes peccatores terræ: ideo dilexi testimonia tua.
120. Confige timore tuo carnes meas: a judiciis enim tuis timui.

113. Sinners I hate,
But Thy law I love.
114. Thou art my Helper and Protector,
In Thy word I trust indeed.
115. Depart from me, ye evil-doers,
I would observe the commandments of my God.
116. Protect me according to Thy word, that I may live;
And let me not be confounded in my hope.
117. Help me and I shall be safe,
And I will ever regard Thy statutes.
118. Thou rejectest all who depart from Thy laws,
For unjust is their planning.
119. Lawbreakers I deem all the sinners of earth;
Hence I love Thy decrees.
120. Penetrate my flesh with Thy fear;
I am afraid of Thy judgments.

'Ayin

121. Feci judicium et justitiam: non tradas me calumniantibus me.
122. Suscipe servum tuum in bonum: non calumnientur me superbi.
123. Oculi mei defecerunt in salutare tuum: et in eloquium justitiæ tuæ.
124. Fac cum servo tuo secundum misericordiam tuam: et justificationes tuas doce me.
125. Servus tuus sum ego: da mihi intellectum, ut sciam testimonia tua.
126. Tempus faciendi Domine: dissipaverunt legem tuam.

121. I practise right and justice:
Abandon me not to my oppressors.
122. Receive Thy servant unto favour:
Let not the proud oppress me.
123. My eyes long for Thy salvation,
And for Thy just promise.
124. Deal with Thy servant according to Thy kindness,
And teach me Thy decrees.
125. I am Thy servant, grant me insight,
That I may know Thy ordinances.
126. It is time for action, O Lord,
They have broken Thy law!

127. Ideo dilexi mandata tua, super aurum et topazion.
128. Propterea ad omnia mandata tua dirigebar : omnem viam iniquam odio habui.

127. Therefore I love Thy commands,
More than gold and precious stone.
128. Therefore I turn me to all Thy laws ;
And every evil way I hate.

Pe

129. Mirabilia testimonia tua : ideo scrutata est ea anima mea.

129. Wondrous are Thy testimonies ;
Therefore my soul searcheth into them.

130. Declaratio sermonum tuorum illuminat : et intellectum dat parvulis.

130. The unfolding of Thy words giveth light,
And maketh the simple to understand.

131. Os meum aperui, et attraxi spiritum : quia mandata tua desiderabam.

131. I open my mouth and pant,
For I long for Thy commandments.

132. Aspice in me, et miserere mei, secundum judicium diligentium nomen tuum.

132. Look on me and pity me,
According to the right of them that love Thy name.

133. Gressus meos dirige secundum eloquium tuum : et non dominetur mei omnis injustitia.

133. Make firm my steps in Thy word,
And let not injustice rule over me.

134. Redime me a calumniis hominum : ut custodiam mandata tua.

134. Save me from the oppression of men,
Then shall I keep Thy commands.

135. Faciem tuam illumina super servum tuum : et doce me justificationes tuas.

135. Let Thy face shine upon Thy servant,
And teach me Thy laws.

136. Exitus aquarum deduxerunt oculi mei : quia non custodierunt legem tuam.

136. My eyes run down in streams of water,
Because those keep not Thy law.

Ṣade

137. Justus es Domine : et rectum judicium tuum.

137. Thou art just, O Lord,
And just is Thy Law.

138. Mandasti justitiam testimonia tua : et veritatem tuam nimis.

138. Thou hast enjoined Thy commands as justice,
And as truth from Thee indeed.

139. Tabescere me fecit zelus meus : quia obliti sunt verba tua inimici mei.

139. My zeal devoureth me:
For my foes remember not Thy words.

140. Ignitum eloquium tuum vehementer : et servus tuus dilexit illud.

140. Purified is Thy word indeed,
And Thy servant holdeth it dear.

141. Adolescentulus sum ego et contemptus : iustificationes tuas non sum oblitus.

141. Little am I and despised ;
Thy precepts I forget not.

142. Justitia tua, justitia in æternum : et lex tua veritas.

142. Thy justice is justice for ever,
And Thy law is truth.

143. Tribulatio, et angustia invenerunt me : mandata tua meditatio mea est.

143. Sorrow and trial I have found ;
Yet Thy laws are my delight.

144. Æquitas testimonia tua in æternum : intellectum da mihi, et vivam.

144. Fair are Thy ordinances for ever ;
Give me understanding that I may live.

Ḳoph

145. Clamavi in toto corde meo exaudi me Domine : justificationes tuas requiram.

145. I cry out with my whole heart, hear me, O Lord !
I will keep Thy laws.

146. Clamavi ad te, salvum me fac : ut custodiam mandata tua.

146. I cry to Thee ; save me,
That I may keep Thy commands.

147. Præveni in maturtatei, et clamavi: quia in verba tua supersperavi.
148. Prævenerunt oculi mei ad te diluculo: ut meditarer eloquia tua.
149. Vocem meam audi secundum misericordiam tuam Domine: et secundum judicium tuum vivifica me.
150. Appropinquaverunt persequentes me iniquitati: a lege autem tua longe facti sunt.

151. Prope es tu Domine: et omnes viæ tuæ veritas.
152. Initio cognovi de testimoniis tuis: quia in æternum fundasti ea.

147. At the dawn I come and cry out:
For I trust in Thy words, indeed.

148. My eyes seek Thee before the dawn,
That I may think on Thy words.

149. Hear my voice in Thy great kindness, O Lord!
And according to Thy justice, give me life.
150. My pursuers make friendship with malice,
They have set themselves far from Thy law.
151. Thou art near, O Lord,
And all Thy ways are truth.
152. From of old I knew of Thy commands,
That Thou hast established them for ever.

153. Vide humilitatem meam, et eripe me: quia legem tuam non sum oblitus.
154. Judica judicium meum et redime me: propter eloquium, tuum vivifica me.
155. Longe a peccatoribus salus: quia justificationes tuas non exquisierunt.
156. Misericordiæ tuæ multæ Domine: secundum judicium tuum vivifica me.
157. Multi qui persequuntur me, et tribulant me: a testimoniis tuis non declinavi.
158. Vidi prævaricantes, et tabescebam: quia eloquia tua non custodierunt.
159. Vide quoniam mandata tua dilexi Domine: in misericordia tua vivifica me.
160. Principium verborum tuorum, veritas: in æternum omnia judicia justitiæ tuæ.

Resh

153. Look on my misery and rescue me,
For I forget not Thy law.

154. Secure for me justice; set me free;
Because of Thy word give me life.

155. Far from sinners is salvation,
Because they seek not Thy laws.

156. Thy mercies are manifold, O Lord;
Give me life according to Thy justice.

157. Many pursue and oppress me;
Yet from Thy laws I turn not aside.

158. When I look on sinners I pine away,
Because they keep not Thy words.

159. See, Lord, how I love Thy commandments;
Because of Thy kindness quicken me.
160. The sum of Thy words is truth,
Thy righteous decrees are for ever.

161. Principes persecuti sunt me gratis: et a verbis tuis formidavit cor meum.
162. Lætabor ego super eloquia tua: sicut qui invenit spolia multa.
163. Iniquitatem odio habui, et abominatus sum: legem autem tuam dilexi.
164. Septies in die laudem dixi tibi, super judicia justitiæ tuæ.
165. Pax multa diligentibus legem tuam: et non est illis scandalum.

Sin

161. Princes persecute me without cause,
Yet my heart feareth only Thy word.

162. I rejoice over Thy words,
Like one that findeth rich spoil.

163. Injustice I hate and abhor;
But I love Thy law.

164. Seven times a day I praise Thee,
Because of Thy just decrees.

165. Great peace have they who love Thy law;
There is no stumbling block for them.

166. Exspectabam salutare tuum Domine: et mandata tua dilexi.
167. Custodivit anima mea testimonia tua: et dilexit ea vehementer.
168. Servavi mandata tua, et testimonia tua: quia omnes viæ meæ in conspectu tuo.

166. I look for Thy salvation, O Lord:
I love Thy commands.

167. My soul keepeth Thy decrees,
And loveth them dearly.

168. I keep Thy commands and laws,
For all my ways are before Thee.

Tau

169. Appropinquet deprecatio mea in conspectu tuo Domine: juxta eloquium tuum da mihi intellectum.
170. Intret postulatio mea in conspectu tuo: secundum eloquium tuum eripe me.
171. Eructabunt labia mea hymnum, cum docueris me justificationes tuas.
172. Pronuntiabit lingua mea eloquium tuum: quia omnia mandata tua æquitas.
173. Fiat manus tua ut salvet me: quoniam mandata tua elegi.
174. Concupivi salutare tuum Domine: et lex tua meditatio mea est.
175. Vivet anima mea, et laudabit te: et judicia tua adjuvabunt me.
176. Erravi, sicut ovis, quæ periit: quære servum tuum, quia mandata tua non sum oblitus.

169. Let my complaint come before Thee, O Lord!
Give me understanding according to Thy word.
170. Let my prayer come before Thee:
Deliver me according to Thy word.

171. My lips shall pour forth praise,
Because Thou teachest me Thy statutes.
172. My tongue shall announce Thy word,
For all Thy commands are just.

173. Let Thy hand save me,
For I have chosen Thy behests.

174. I long for Thy salvation, O Lord,
And Thy law is my delight.

175. My soul shall live and praise Thee,
And Thy judgments will help me.

176. If I stray like a sheep that is lost,
Seek Thou Thy servant,
For I forget not Thy commands.

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1. *Immaculati in via*: Hebr. 'blameless of way,' *i.e.*, *integri vitae*.

2. *Scrutari*: the seeking implied is practical seeking—not study, but observance.

3. The Hebrew would, perhaps, be better rendered with van Sante; *Sane non operantur iniquitatem qui in verbis ejus ambulant.*

4. *Mandasti . . . custodiri*—'Thou hast enjoined that they be kept.'

5. *Dirigantur*: 'established,' 'made firm.' *Ad custodiendas*='so that they may be kept.'

6. *Perspexero in* =keep them clearly before me.

7. *Directio*—uprightness. *In eo quod*='when.'

9. This may be regarded as a question put by the youth of Israel. All that follows teaches that the Hebrew youth can keep his path pure and straight only by observing the Torah.

11. *Abscondi*: the Hebrew word is that used for hiding a treasure: the Torah is kept jealously guarded in his heart like a treasure.

13. *Pronuntiavi,* 'declare,' or, 'rehearse' with praise.

14. The way of the commands is the path the commands prescribe. The psalmist says that for him the observance of the Law is better and more desirable than all riches.

15. *Exercebor* refers rather to mental than bodily activity. The Hebrew verb *'ᵃsiḥah* means, 'I would ponder.'

16. *Meditabor* ought to be *delector.*

17. *Retribuere* is here equivalent to *tribuere.* If life is granted to the psalmist he promises to keep the Law.

18. The wondrous wealth of the Law cannot be seen unless God opens our eyes; the wealth in question is the depth of thought and meaning in the Law.

19. The psalmist is a guest on earth, and as a guest must be instructed in the customs of the place where he sojourns, so God must instruct the psalmist (Israel) in the due manner of living on earth.

20. *Concupivit . . . desiderare,* 'wears itself out in longing.'

21. The psalmist will seek by observing the Law to avoid the curse which is threatened against the godless.

22. Shame and disgrace are thought of as a heavy burden, which the psalmist begs God to remove from his shoulders. The observance of the Jewish Law involved the Jews who lived among heathens in mockery and disgrace.

23. Even if princes conspire against him the psalmist cannot be turned from the Law.

25. This verse seems to represent Israel as threatened with destruction. The 'word' here=promise.

26. The psalmist comes to Yahweh with all his cares. Hitherto Yahweh has hearkened to his prayers: surely He will hearken now also.

27. *Justificationes*='precepts,' 'commands' (the Law): for the 'way of the precepts' *cf.* verse 14.

Exercebor—Hebrew, 'think on.'

28. *Dormitavit,* 'grow weary.'

29. The *via iniquitatis* may mean the heathen philosophies against which the psalmist would warn the young men of Israel. The Hebrew speaks of the 'way of falsehood.'

30. On his part the psalmist has chosen the 'way of truth,' *i.e.,* the path prescribed by the Torah.

32. *Dilatasti*: to 'widen the heart' is to fill it with comfort and joy.

33. *Legem pone*: this is a very literal rendering of the Greek. The Hebrew has *horeni,* 'give me instruction.'

Semper: the Hebrew has *'eḳebh,* 'reward,' and the sense of the Hebrew may be: 'I will keep the law, and find my reward in the mere keeping thereof.'

35. *In semitam*, for *in semita*.

36. Note how avarice is put in direct opposition to devotion of the heart to God's law.

38. *Eloquium*, promise. *In timore tuo*, because of the fear which he feels before Thee.

39. The shame is obviously that which comes upon him because of his observance of the law. In the nature of things the opposition and contempt which the psalmist has to contend with are unreasonable, for God's ordinances are altogether good (*jucunda*) and should not bring disgrace.

42. If the Lord shows clearly His favour to the psalmist, then the psalmist can silence his adversaries by pointing to the tokens of God's good pleasure.

43. The word of truth is the divine truth with which he will confute his foes.

45. *Latitudine*, wideness, freedom, gladness.

46. Even under heathen rulers Israel will boldly declare the greatness of God's law.

48. Raising up the hands is a gesture of prayers : the verse makes the Law, in a sense, the object of adoration.

Exercebar, mentally ' ponder over.'

50. Israel's trust in Yahweh's promises keeps her alive in the midst of her humiliations.

52. In spite of the mockery of the godless Israel will adhere to the Law. She remembers how her ancient foes were punished, and is confident that similar punishments await her present enemies.

53. *Defectio* : the Hebrew word indicates rather deep anger than despair.

Pro peccatoribus=' on account of sinners.'

54. *Cantabiles* : Jerome renders, *carmina*. This psalm is itself an indication of the manner in which the Law became a theme of song.

56. *Haec facta est* : the feminine is for the neuter, as usual in Hebrew. The psalmist means that it has been assigned to him as his lot to keep the words (the Law) of Yahweh. This he regards, of course, as a special privilege from the Lord.

57. This is practically a repetition of the thought in verse 56.

61. With this imagery of the hunter and his snare *cf*. Ps. xvii. 6.

66. The psalmist prays for sound judgment and knowledge.

67. The psalmist emphasises the disciplinary value of God's chastening.

69. The godless heap up lies, *i.e.*, calumnies against the psalmist.

Scrutabor represents a Hebrew verb which means ' I shall observe.'

70. *Coagulatum* : the Hebrew means, that their heart had grown fat and, therefore, has lost its sensitiveness. The Septuagint translators read here *ḥalabh*, ' milk,' instead of *ḥelebh*, ' fat.' Jerome

renders: *Incrassatum est velut adeps cor eorum.* The Hebrew verb here rendered *coagulatum est* is a *hapax legomenon.* Some of the Latin commentators explain the *coagulatum* as implying that the heart of the godless has become hard (as cheese which is made from coagulated milk is hardened) and is, therefore, insensible to the words of God. Others take the coagulation of the milk as a token of its corruption and find here a description of the corruption of the hearts of the godless.

While the heart of the sinners has grown insensitive, the psalmist finds his delight in the Law.

73. *Cf.* Job x. 8. God has moulded the body of the psalmist, and, therefore, he prays that God would fashion his mind also by giving him understanding.

74. When the servants of Yahweh see that the faith and piety of the psalmist have been rewarded, they will recognise therein a token of God's power and rejoice.

75. The trials of Israel were in reality proofs of Yahweh's fidelity to His word.

83. *Uter in pruina*: The Hebrew has, 'Like a bottle in smoke.' The wine-filled skin (*uter*) was hung in smoke to mature the wine more quickly. In the process the skin grew black and wrinkled: so, too, has Israel grown wrinkled and hideous through affliction, and the mourning which she wears is like the blackness of the skin-bottle. But as the wine becomes mellow in the skin, so does Israel's knowledge of the Law grow fuller and deeper through her suffering.

The rendering *in pruina* is a reproduction of the Greek ἐν πάχνῃ: it is possible that the original Greek rendering was ἐν κάπνῃ ('in smoke') and that this became corrupted. If we retain *pruina* we must think of a skin as shrivelling up in the frost. But then the relation between the effects of the frost on the skin and on the contents of the skin is lost sight of.

87. *Paulo minus,* 'almost.' *Cf.* Ps. xciii. 17.

89. The word of God abides for ever like the heavens. The word is the Law.

90. The permanence of earth is a sort of guarantee of that of the Law.

91. It is in consequence of the divine command that heaven and earth stand so firm to-day. *Dies* represents the Hebrew *hayyom,* 'to-day.' As heaven and earth abide, so also will the Law abide. Later it would be said that heaven and earth would pass away, but God's word would abide.

92, 93. It was, in fact, the Law that prevented Israel from being assimilated to foreign peoples in the Diaspora.

96. While every earthly perfection comes to an end, there is no limit to the perfection or the existence of the Law.

98. The Law makes the Israelites wiser than the heathens,

because it gives them a deeper and truer philosophy than any which the heathens possess.

99. The psalmist's teachers here are, probably, his would-be teachers, *i.e.*, those who would inoculate Israel with worldly speculation.

100. The practice of the Law gives more wisdom than does length of experience: the fear of God is the highest wisdom.

102. *Legem posuisti mihi*: *cf.* verse 33. The Hebrew has here, 'Because Thou hast taught me.' The point which the psalmist makes is that Israel has had as Teacher of God, and that she has not learned from men.

104. 'Every way of iniquity' includes all the theories of the heathen philosophers.

106. The psalmist has sworn to observe the Law, and he will keep his oath.

108. *Voluntaria oris*: the reference is to the solemn promise which the psalmist has made to keep the Law: or the *voluntaria* may be simply the petitions which he is here offering to God.

109. He bears his life in his hands, *i.e.*, he is in constant peril. Yet he does not forget the Law.

111. The Law is Israel's most precious inheritance. It is now no longer the Land of Canaan that Israel holds as her inheritance, but the Law of God. We have here a change in standpoint as compared with earlier Hebrew literature.

112. The Hebrew seems to mean, 'Eternal is the reward.' *Cf.* Ps. xviii. 12.

113. Sinners: the Hebrew has, 'half ones,' or, 'two-minded ones.'

118. It is useless for evil-doers to try to carry out their plans, because Yahweh frustrates all their schemes.

120. *Confige*, etc.: the Greek translators have here read an Aramaic verb instead of a Hebrew one: see Introduction, p. xl. The Hebrew means, 'My flesh shudders (creeps) before Thy terrors'—which is in complete parallelism with the second part of the verse.

126. It is time for Yahweh to take action.

127. The *ideo* is difficult here. *Topazion* is the topaz: the Hebrew word *paz* means something like fine gold.

128. *Viam iniquam*. *Cf.* verse 104.

130. *Declaratio*: the Hebrew has, 'The door (or gate) of Thy words enlighteneth,' as if God's words were a brightly shining gate or door, through which one might enter in unto knowledge. The Greeks took *pethaḥ*, 'gate,' as a form of the verb *pathaḥ*, and rendered 'the opening up,' 'the making plain.'

131. *Attraxi spiritum*: the gesture expresses longing.

132. *Secundum judicium diligentium*, 'according to the right of those who love.'

136. 'They' is the indefinite subject.

138. The commands of Yahweh are an expression of truth and justice.

148. *Praevenerunt . . . diluculo*: the Hebrew has, 'My eyes anticipate the night watches to think of Thee.' There may be a reference here to the night-services in the Temple, and this verse would then imply that the psalmist was himself one of those whose duty it was to help in the night-services in the Temple. But the verse may mean simply that the psalmist's zeal and love for the Law forced him to rise even in the night time to meditate upon it.

150. *Appropinquaverunt . . . iniquitati*: they have approached evil (or treachery), so as to make an alliance with it.

151. The psalmist wishes for the nearness of God, not for the friendship of godlessness.

152. *Initio*, 'from of old.'

154. *Judica judicium meum*: 'lead my cause,' *i.e.*, the cause of Israel against her heathen adversaries.

158. The *praevaricantes* are, apparently, renegades from Judaism.

160. *Principium*, the 'sum,' or 'content,' rather than the 'foundation.'

161. Even though the power of princes is employed against Judaism, yet Israel will stand by the Law.

164. There is no necessary reference here to stated times of daily prayer, but rather to the unbroken continuance of the psalmist's prayer.

165. The 'peace' in question is joy of heart: the faithful worshippers of Yahweh are confident that all will ultimately be well with them, and that their foes will receive their deserts.

176. The wandering of Israel is not moral straying, but national misfortune, like the Exile.

PSALMS CXIX-CXXXIII

THE 'GRADUAL PSALMS'

PSALMS cxix–cxxxiii form a distinctive group in the Psalter, each of them bears, in the Vulgate the title *Canticum Graduum,* which renders the Hebrew *Shir hamma'ᵃloth* (except in Ps. cxx where it represents *Shir lamma'ᵃloth*). Various explanations of this title have been put forward by scholars. The following are the more important among those suggested :

(1). In Esdras vii. 9 the return of the Exiles from Babylon is called a *ma'ᵃlah.* Hence it has been proposed to take *Shir hamma'ᵃloth* as='Song of the Exiles' Return.'

Against the possibility of taking all the Gradual Psalms as songs of the returning exiles stands the fact that Ps. cxxi obviously supposes that the City and Temple have been restored, and that in Ps. cxxxiii the full liturgy of the Temple is represented as actually being carried on. Besides, while *ma'ᵃlah* can mean an 'ascent' or 'going-up' (and could, therefore, be used of the going-up from the plains of Babylonia to the highlands of Judea) it cannot mean a group of people going up, and still less can *ma'ᵃloth* mean groups of people 'ascending' or 'going up.' *Shir ha'olim* would be the Hebrew for *Canticum ascendentium.*

(2). The verb *'alah,* from which the noun *ma'ᵃlah* (plural, *ma'ᵃloth*) is derived, is the term which would naturally be used in reference to the going-up of Jewish pilgrims to the great feasts at Jerusalem (*cf.* Luke ii. 42 ; Ps. cxxi. 4), and it is likely, therefore, that *Shir hamma-'ᵃloth* means 'Song of the Pilgrimages,' or 'Pilgrims' Song,' and that the Gradual songs were the songs sung by pilgrims on their way to the Holy City for the great feasts, or returning to their homes after the celebration of those feasts in Jerusalem.

This theory of the meaning of the title of the Gradual Psalms has always been popular, and there is no doubt that many features of the Gradual Psalms fit in well with the view that they were written for the Jewish Feast-pilgrims. Yet, on the other hand, we possess no indications in Hebrew literature, outside these psalms, that there existed a body of songs for the use of the Feast-pilgrims.

(3). *Ma'ᵃloth* may mean steps of a stairs (*gradus,* ἀναβαθμός) ; hence it has been suggested that the 'Gradual Psalms' were really 'Songs of the stairs-steps,' being so called because they were sung on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles by Levitical singers who stood on the fifteen steps that led from the Court of the women into

the Court of the men. The Talmud passages Middoth ii. 5 and Sukka 51*b*, are quoted in favour of this explanation. The Talmud does not, however, assert that our fifteen 'Gradual Psalms' were sung on the occasion in question, and it is possible that the Talmud passage dealing with the fifteen steps leading from one Court into the other (*Middoth* ii. 5) is itself based on the existence of the fifteen 'Gradual Psalms.' The Talmud text which describes the musical function that took place on the fifteen steps on the first day of Tabernacles (Sukka 51*b*) merely compares the fifteen steps with the fifteen Gradual Psalms, and does not say that these were sung on the fifteen steps.

It would seem, therefore, that there is no real foundation for the theory that our psalms were so called because they were sung on the fifteen steps of the stairs which led from the women's Court into the Court of the men.

(4). Taking *ma'aloth* again in the sense of steps of a stair or ladder, some writers have seen in the title 'Song of the Steps' an indication of the poetical form of the psalms in question. It has been pointed out that, in some of the Gradual Psalms, at least, a ladder-like arrangement can be seen, each succeeding phrase taking up and carrying a little further the main thought or imagery of the preceding phrase. Thus in Ps. cxx:

I raise my eyes to the hills:
  Whence shall *help* come to me?
My *help* is from Yahweh,
  The maker of heaven and earth.
Let Him not give thy foot unto stumbling!
  Let not Thy *Guardian slumber!*
No! Neither *slumbereth nor sleepeth*
  The *Guardian* of Israel.

And note how, in the following verses of the same psalm, the word *Keeper* (or *Guardian*) is repeated.

It is poss ble, indeed, to discover this ladder-like, or up-climbing structure in one or two of the Gradual Psalms; but there is no genuine trace of it in most of the Gradual Psalms (*cf.* cxxiv, cxxviii, cxxx, cxxxi, cxxxii, etc.). A theory that applies only in an insignificant percentage of the cases to be explained, need not be taken seriously.

(5). In his lectures in Berlin, Friedrich Delitzsch was accustomed to maintain that *ma'aloth* must be taken as='caravans' (primarily up-going caravans, and then, caravans generally), and that *shir hamma'aloth* means 'Song of the Caravans.' Delitzsch used to seek a support for his view in the title of Ps. cxx (Vulgate) *Shir lamma'aloth* —'Song belonging to the *Ma'aloth*,' *i.e.*, 'Song of the Caravans.' According to Delitzsch, then, the 'Gradual Psalms' were a collection of 'Songs of the Road' used by pious Hebrew traders to beguile the dreary hours of long marches, and to comfort and encourage

themselves when they were home-sick for the Holy City and the Temple liturgy among heathen strangers in distant lands. This theory does not differ greatly from the second above described, but it sometimes seems to be more applicable to particular passages of the 'Gradual Psalms' than the 'Feast-Pilgrim' explanation.

Whatever may be the precise meaning of the title *Canticum Graduum*, Christian writers of all times have seen in it the suggestion of a mystical progress, of *ascensiones cordis ad Deum.* As Jerome in his *Commentarioli* puts it: *Quindecim graduum psalmi per quosdam profectus nos ad summa perducunt, ut in Domini atriis possimus dicere: 'Ecce nunc benedicite Dominum, omnes servi Domini, in atriis domus Dei ejus.'*

Cf. Bellarmine: *Sed quidquid sit de his opinionibus* (about the meaning of the title in question), *illud certum est ascensiones istas, sive de Babylone in Jerusalem, sive per gradus templi Salomonis, figuras fuisse ascensionis electorum qui per gradus virtutum, ac praecipue caritatis, ascendunt de valle lacrymarum ad coelestem Jerusalem.*

In the commentary which follows the 'Caravan' theory and the 'Feast-Pilgrimage' theory will be chiefly considered.

PSALM CXIX

AMONG GODLESS STRANGERS

THIS psalm resembles Psalms lxiii, cxxxix and cxli. The psalmist is surrounded by godless and treacherous foes. One of these has sworn that he will destroy the psalmist, and has used in his oath the familiar imprecation-formula: "This may God do to me and still more if, etc." The psalmist takes up the words of the threat, and says: "That which thou threatenest unto me—arrows of the warrior and coals of the broom (see below)—will indeed come upon thyself, according to the words of thy imprecation." The carnage and destruction which his enemies are preparing for the psalmist will be used against his enemies themselves. In verses 5–7 the psalmist reflects with sadness on the long days he has been forced to spend among the barbarians of Kedar—people who answer friendly speech with savage attacks.

It would be easy to take this psalm as a prayer and complaint of a caravan-group returning to Palestine through a country infested with treacherous nomads. The picture drawn of the nomads represents them as wholly barbarous, enemies of peace and order, men who answer the traveller's greeting, "Peace be with you," by a sudden onslaught on his caravan.

1. Canticum graduum.

Ad Dominum cum tribularer clamavi: et exaudivit me.
2. Domine libera animam meam a labiis iniquis, et a lingua dolosa.
3. Quid detur tibi, aut quid apponatur tibi ad linguam dolosam?
4. Sagittæ potentis acutæ, cum carbonibus desolatoriis.

5. Heu mihi, quia incolatus meus prolongatus est: habitavi cum habitantibus Cedar:
6. Multum incola fuit anima mea.
7. Cum his, qui oderunt pacem, eram pacificus: cum loquebar illis, impugnabant me gratis.

1. A song of the Pilgrimages (or, A song of the Caravans).

Unto the Lord I cry in my distress,
And He heareth me.
2. O Lord rescue me from lying lips,
From treacherous tongue!

3. What shall "be done to thee and what superadded to Thee,"
Thou treacherous tongue?
4. "Sharp arrows of the warrior,
And coals of the desert."

5. Woe is me that my sojourn is prolonged!
That I dwell with the tents of Kedar!

6. Too long hath my soul sojourned
With them that hate peace.
7. Peace-loving am I; yet when I address them,
They assail me without reason.

1. *Ad Dominum*, etc. : we have here an echo of Ps. xvii. 7 ; the psalmist is so confident of being heard that he says, ' He heareth me.'

2. Treachery and falsehood are the chief characteristics of those among whom the psalmist finds himself. For Hebrews trading and travelling in distant lands it would be peculiarly irksome to have to deal with people essentially dishonest and unreliable.

3. *Quid detur*, etc. : the Hebrew reads the verbs in the active—but that does not make any great contrast with the Vulgate text. The meaning of verses 3 and 4 is greatly disputed. The least objectionable explanation of these verses takes them as a sort of repetition of an imprecation and threat used against the psalmist by one (or more) of the unpleasant people among whom he is sojourning. The usual form of oath among the Hebrews was : " So may God do unto me and more, if I do (or, do not), etc." *Cf.*, for instance, 1 Kings iii. 17 ; xx. 13 ; Ruth i. 17. The psalmist's enemy has just sworn to give reins to his fury against the psalmist, and has invoked on himself the same destruction (in a more intense form) which he has threatened against the psalmist, if he fails to carry out his threat. The psalmist answers the threat and imprecation by saying : " So swearest thou ; but I tell thee that God will hear thy curse and will indeed send thee the doom thou invokest on thyself." That doom is described (no doubt, in the terms of the original imprecation) as ' sharp arrows of the warrior ' (*i.e.*, such as would not miss their mark), and ' coals of the desert ' (or as the Heberw has it, coals of broom '). The desert charcoal, or ' coals of broom '=either the charcoal made from broom-wood which was used in the smithies where the arrow heads were hardened and sharpened ; or glowing coals of broom-wood used to bring the destruction of fire among the homes of the nomads. The arrows and the coals symbolise, then, either slaughter, or slaughter and burnings. *Desolatoriis* renders the Greek ἐρημικοῖς, ' belonging to the desert.' Hence *carbones desolatorii* ought to mean desert-charcoal, or glowing embers of desert-wood. The Hebrew has ' coals of broom ' : *r^e^thanim*= broom (*genista*), not juniper, as Jerome renders it. Because the broom is a desert-shrub, the Septuagint translators rendered *r^e^thanim* ἐρημικοῖς. *Cf.* the name of the desert-station Rithmah in Num. xxxiii. 18 : it is obviously connected with *rethem*, ' broom.'

Ad linguam dolosam : the Hebrew has no preposition, but simply *lashon r^e^miyyah*, ' deceitful tongue ' ; hence the vocative has been used in the translation above (*cf.* Ps. li. 4). The treacherous foe is styled ' deceitful tongue,' and hence the masculine forms of the promiminal suffixes are used in the Hebrew, though *lashon* in the ordinary meaning, ' tongue ' is feminine. The *ad* in *ad linguam* has arisen from a dittography, *lashon* being read as *l^e^lashon*. The ascription of the enemy's punishment by arrows and fire to the foolish utterances of his own tongue should be compared with Ps. lxiii. 5–6,

where evil speech is likened to arrows, and with Prov. xvi. 27, which speaks of the burning fire that is on the lips of the ungodly (*cf.* Jer. ix. 3). The arrow, shot forth by the tongue, returns against the speaker, and the fire, kindled by the tongue, consumes the tongue itself whereby it was kindled. One is reminded here of James iii. 6.

5. *Prolongatus est*: this takes the place of the Hebrew *Meshekh*—the name of a people that dwelt between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea (Gen. x. 2; 1 Chron. i. 5; Ezech. xxvii. 13). *Meshekh* is used by Ezechiel as a general name for North-eastern Nomads associated with Gog. (xxxviii. 2; xxxix. 1). Instead of *Meshekh* the Septuagint translators read *mushshakh*='drawn out': this gives a sufficiently good sense in the context. However, the parallelism with Kedar (=the nomads of Arabia; Gen. xxv. 3; Is. xxi. 16; lx. 7; Jer. ii. 10; Ezech. xxvii. 21) makes the reading *Meshekh* more probable. The caravan trade of Solomon (and presumably, therefore, of later times) extended to Egypt and to the far North and East. It is possible that, in the districts inhabited by the tribes of Meshekh and Kedar, Hebrew traders and travellers were accustomed to meet with a more or less intense hostility.

6. *Multum*: Hebrew *rabbath*, 'already too long.' The nomads are characteristically described by the psalmist as 'haters of peace'; their wild and warlike ways are shocking to him.

7. *Pacificus*: Hebrew, *shalom*, 'peace,'; the psalmist was peace itself, but when he addresses the wild tribesmen with the familiar, friendly salute, "Peace (*shalom*) unto You." For answer they rush upon him with murderous intent. *Cf.* Ps. cviii. 4 for a somewhat similar situation.

PSALM CXX

I LIFT MY EYES TO THE HILLS

THIS psalm is best understood as chanted by at least two singers (or groups of singers) who take up each verse alternately. The singers are members of a caravan-group of traders or pilgrims returning to Jerusalem. They have come from far-off plain-lands, and strain their eyes, as they march, for a glimpse of the sacred hills on which the Holy City stands. And as they move forward on their journey their longing for Jerusalem becomes ever more intense, and their sense of the perils of the way becomes more vivid. Hence one of the travellers cries out: 'I strain my eyes for the hills of Jerusalem; but whence am I to look for help in the perils of the journey, while the House of my God is so far away?' An answering voice reminds him that the God who made heaven and earth can help His worshippers not only in the Holy City, but all the world over. Then the first singer (or group of singers) chants a brief prayer for the company, begging Yahweh not to permit the feet of the travellers to stumble, but to guard them both on the march by day, and when they rest in the night-time. The prayer is answered by the second group with the confident cry: 'Neither slumbereth nor sleepeth the Guardian of Israel.' The spirit of this cry is the same as that which finds expression in verse 2. The first singer takes up the thought of his comrades and, with a confidence not less than theirs, asserts that the Guardian of Israel is surely the Guardian of the band of travelling Israelites. Yahweh is their shelter from all perils of their journey: He moves ever at their right hand. The thought of Yahweh as shelter (or 'shade') is developed in verse 6: '(When Yahweh is at thy right hand) the sun-rays cannot smite thee by day, nor the moon-rays do thee harm by night.' The first singer, with ever increasing confidence, resumes: 'Not merely from sun and from moon, but from every peril of life, Yahweh is thy protector.' Then the second group of singers in an enthusiastic outburst of faith cries out: 'Yahweh guardeth thy coming and going—every phase of thy life—not merely in Sion and not merely on this journey but at every moment for ever.'

We can see that the celebration of the loving providence of God, which is the chief aim of this psalm, is a very suitable purpose for a caravan-song, or a song of pilgrims. The longing for a glimpse of the holy hills, with which the psalm begins, points to a home-coming of the psalmist from distant lands. The perils from which the psalm

looks for rescue are obviously the myriad risks of journeying by unfamiliar and bandit-infested paths. To these risks belong especially the danger of sun-stroke by day and the perils of the moon's baneful influence by night. In the long weary hours of slow travelling by day, and in the watches of the night a song like this, so insistent on Yahweh's care and love at all times and in all places for His own, would bring peace and comfort to the hearts of pious wayfarers—and that all the more if the song were sung, as apparently it was intended to be sung, by different groups of singers.

This simple beautiful song has, of course, meaning and application for others as well as for the caravan-folk of Israel. The unlimited trust in the Guardian who knows our goings forth and returnings, and who slumbers not, nor sleeps, which cheered the home-faring Hebrews, is needful for all who find the way of life's homeward caravan-journey perilous and weary.

With this psalm should be read Ps. xc. striking echoes of which occur here in verses 5–7.

Canticum graduum.	A 'Caravan song.'
	(*a*)
1. Levavi oculos meos in montes, unde veniet auxilium mihi.	1. I raise my eyes to the hills : Whence shall help come to me ?
	(*b*)
2. Auxilium meum a Domino, qui fecit cœlum et terram.	2. My help is from Yahweh, The Maker of heaven and earth !
	(*a*)
3. Non det in commotionem pedem tuum : neque dormitet qui custodit te.	3. May He give not thy foot unto stumbling : May the Guardian not slumber !
	(*b*)
4. Ecce non dormitabit neque dormiet, qui custodit Israel.	4. No ! Neither slumbereth, nor sleepeth The Guardian of Israel.
	(*a*)
5. Dominus custodit te, Dominus protectio tua, super manum dexteram tuam.	5. Yahweh guardeth thee ; Yahweh is thy shelter, At thy right hand.
	(*b*)
6. Per diem sol non uret te : neque luna per noctem.	6. The sun shall not smite thee by day, Nor the moon in the night-time.
	(*a*)
7. Dominus custodit te ab omni malo : custodiat animam tuam Dominus.	7. Yahweh guardeth thee from every ill : He guardeth thy soul.
	(*b*)
8. Dominus custodiat introitum tuum, et exitum tuum : ex hoc nunc, et usque in sæculum.	8. Yahweh guardeth thy coming and going, Henceforth and forever.

1. This psalm is entitled in the Hebrew, *Shir lamma'aloth*, which ought to mean, 'A song belonging to caravans'—if *ma'aloth* means 'caravans'; we could not well translate the Hebrew tit e, 'A song belonging to the steps,' or, 'A song belonging to the ascents.'

In montes: Sion, seated on the sacred hills, is still far away, and the singer feels himself, for the time, cut off from the immediate protection of Yahweh. Then in his sense of loneliness and helplessness he asks: 'Whence is my help (help, *i.e.*, from the perils of the journey) to come?' *Unde* denotes a direct question.

2. The faint-heartedness of the first singer is immediately confronted with a reminder from another singer (or group of singers), that distance from the Holy Hills is no ground for fear: the Maker of heaven and earth does not limit His protection to Sion.

3. The 'stumbling' (*commotio*) suggests obviously the risks of journeying (*cf.* Ps. lxv. 9). The first singer has fully accepted the encouragement of the second. The Maker of heaven and earth will protect the caravan from the perils of the journey.

4. That the Guardian of Israel never slumbers passes beyond the statement of verse 3: there it was said that Yahweh keeps the feet of the wayfarers from stumbling while they march: now it is said that Yahweh never relaxes His watchful care at any time—not even in the night. On the day-marches and in the night-watches, the caravan is equally secure in the loving care of God. The God of Israel protects His own at all times.

5. Compare with this and the two following verses Ps. xc. 2, 4, 10–12. Compare also Ecclus. xxxiv. 19:

> The eyes of the Lord are upon them that fear Him,
> A mighty shield and a strong stay,
> A cover from scorching Sirocco, a shadow from noontide heat,
> A guard from stumbling and a succour from falling.

Protectio represents the Hebrew *ṣel*, 'shadow,' or 'shelter.' The right side was the more unprotected in battle, for the shield was carried in the left hand. To be protected on the right hand was, therefore, to be perfectly secure. The idea of Yahweh as *ṣel*, 'shelter,' is developed into the thought of God as protector against sun-stroke and moon-influence in the next verse. *Cf.* Is. xxv. 4.

6. *Uret*: the Hebrew has 'smite.' The reference is to sun-stroke —an obvious risk of caravan-journeys. Parallel with the smiting of the sun is that of the moon. The belief in a baneful influence of the moon's rays was, and is, widespread in the East. The Babylonians ascribed to moon-rays the power of causing leprosy, and the modern Arabs believe that the moon-rays cause blindness. Compare our 'lunatic' and 'moon-struck.' The dangers from sun and moon would be peculiarly those of caravan-journeys.

7. Yahweh protects not only against sun-ray and moon-ray, but against evil of every kind.

8. 'Comings-in and goings-forth'=all the actions of life (*cf.* Deut. xxviii. 6; xxxi. 2): it may be that the phrase in the present context is intended to suggest the thought of going forth and returning on caravan-journeys. *Ex hoc nunc*: *cf.* Ps. cxii. 2.

PSALM CXXI

THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM

THE preceding psalm spoke of longing for the House of Yahweh: in this psalm the pilgrims, or travellers, have arrived at the gates of Jerusalem. One of them tells of the joy with which he heard the longed-for tidings: "To-day we shall enter the House of Yahweh." Standing in full view of the Holy City, the psalmist sings of its beauty and strength, muses on its wondrous past, and reflects on the amazing privilege which it enjoys, in being the place of Yahweh's dwelling.

Fair and well-compacted, Jerusalem reveals herself to the psalmist—a beautiful fortress-city set proudly on the hills. The ravages of Babylonian invaders have been repaired, and the new Jerusalem of the post-Exilic period is strong again with walls and citadels, and is proud with the glory of the Second Temple. And as the psalmist surveys Jerusalem so stoutly re-built, his mind moves back over the ancient history of Sion. He sees in spirit the tribes streaming thither for the three great festivals, and, in reverence, he recalls the majesty of old-time Law of priest and king, of which Jerusalem was the centre.

Then he turns to his companions and urges them to join in prayer for the welfare of the City—for the peace which the name Jerusalem implies—for the prosperity of her friends, for the lasting strength of the city's defences, and the security of her life. This prayer he solicits in the name of the brethren and neighbours whom the travellers are about to rejoin, but above all in the name of the House of God, which crowns the city.

This psalm shows in a striking manner how closely connected for the Hebrews were love of home and religion. To long for Jerusalem was to long for God.

1. Canticum graduum.

Lætatus sum in his, quæ dicta sunt mihi: In domum Domini ibimus.

2. Stantes erant pedes nostri, in atriis tuis Jerusalem.

3. Jerusalem, quæ ædificatur ut civitas: cujus participatio ejus in idipsum.

1. A caravan song.

I rejoiced when 'twas said to me:
"We go to Jerusalem."

2. Even now stand our feet,
In thy gates, O Jerusalem.

3. Jerusalem, thou city well built,
So firmly compacted!

4. Illuc enim ascenderunt tribus, tribus Domini: testimonium Israel ad confitendum nomini Domini.
5. Quia illic sederunt sedes in judicio, sedes super domum David.

4. Thither went up the tribes,
The tribes of Yahweh—
('Twas a law unto Israel)—
To praise Yahweh's name:
5. For there stood the thrones for judgment,
The thrones of David's house!

6. Rogate quæ ad pacem sunt Jerusalem: et abundantia diligentibus te:
7. Fiat pax in virtute tua: et abundantia in turribus tuis.
8. Propter fratres meos, et proximos meos, loquebar pacem de te:
9. Propter domum Domini Dei nostri, quæsivi bona tibi.

6. Pray ye for that which is unto Jerusalem's peace,
And for the prosperity of those that love thee.
7. In thy citadels be peace,
And abundance in thy towers.
8. Because of my brethren and my neighbours,
I would pray for thy peace;
9. Because of the House of Yahweh, our God,
I pray for what is best for thee.

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1. The Massoretic text ascribes this psalm to David. It is probable, however, that the psalm is from the post-Exilic period, and that the ascription to David is due to verse 5.

In his quae dicta sunt: the Hebrew ought, probably, to be read *b^e'omram*, 'when they said.' 'They' is to be understood indefinitely.

In domum, etc., are the words of the message which the psalmist had heard. Some one of his company has seen at last a glimpse of the Holy Hills, and has hastened to tell his brethren that soon they shall see the House of the Lord.

2. *Stantes erant* may mean, as far as the Hebrew goes, 'have taken their stand.' The company of pilgrims or travellers is now at the gates (*atria=sh^e'arim*, 'gates') of Jerusalem. They can survey clearly the outlines of the city and they stand for a while to chant a song of its beauty, strength, and holiness.

3. *Quae aedificatur* represents a passive participle both in Hebrew and Greek: hence it ought to be rendered 'thou built-one' or 'thou rebuilt-one.' The verse means in the Hebrew, 'Jerusalem, thou that art built as a city completely compacted.' The reference in the description is to the fortress-character of the city, with its well-arranged buildings, and to the absence of that straggling aspect which cities built in a plain would usually have. It may also be implied that the city, reconstructed as it has been, is as closely knit together and as strong as was the pre-Exilic Jerusalem.

Participatio, μετοχὴ, means the connection of part with part in the structure of the city. The Septuagint translators took the Hebrew *ḥubb^erah*, which is a participle (='shut up'), as if it were a noun (*ḥebrah*) meaning 'comradeship,' or 'connection.' *In idipsum*='all at once,' or, 'together.' Jerome in his *Commentarioli* says: *Cujus participatio ejus in idipsum. Haec est sanctae aedificatio civitatis, si*

sibi in omni parte sit particeps et invicem pro se membra sollicita sint. Jerome's thought is evidently based on Ephes. iv. 13–16. In his translation Jerome renders the second half of the verse: *Cujus participatio ejus simul.* The *cujus . . . ejus* is a literal reproduction (as in the Vulgate) of the Hebrew construction.

It is clear that verse 3 could not have been sung by the exiles returning from Babylon, since it supposes Jerusalem as a city, practically, at least, intact.

4. The reference is to the going up to Jerusalem for the celebration of the three great feasts—Pasch, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. *Testimonium Israel* is a parenthesis, 'This was a law for Israel.' The law in question is Exod. xxiii. 17: *Ter in anno apparebit omne masculinum tuum coram Domino Deo tuo.* The purpose of the threefold appearance before the Lord is here stated to have been *ad confitendum nomini Domini.*

5. Probably the going up to Jerusalem for worship at the three great feasts was associated also, to some extent, with the settlement of difficult legal problems by the central legal authorities in the capital. The thrones for judgment are put by metonymy for the judges.

Super Dominum David: according to the Hebrew, 'belonging to the house of David': the Hebrew preposition *l*^{e} has been incorrectly rendered by *super.* Jerome has, *sedes domui David.* The Davidic dynasty was the source of all legal authority in old-time Jerusalem.

6. In the translation, Jerusalem has been taken as a dative. Some forms of the Greek text make it an accusative, others a dative. The Hebrew means: 'Ask for the peace of Jerusalem.' This has been followed above in the translation. Jerusalem is the centre of cult and law, and the visitors to the city are urged to pray for its welfare and the continuance of its life. The ordinary greeting to an individual would contain a prayer for *shalom,* 'peace'; hence the greeting of a traveller or pilgrim to the Holy City on his return would embody, in some way, the formula of ordinary greeting between friends. It may be assumed that the psalmist has here in view also, in addition to the usual Hebrew greeting, "Peace with thee," the fact that the very name of the Holy City, Jerusalem (Hebrew, *Y*^{e}*rushalem*), was considered to include in itself an echo of *shalom* (*cf.* Heb. vii. 2). *Shalom* is not merely *pax*; it includes the ideas of *integritas, incolumitas,* 'success.'

Et abundantia diligentibus te: the Hebrew has, 'And may they who love thee dwell in security.' Instead of *yishlayu,* 'may they dwell in security,' the Greeks read *shalwah l*^{e}, 'let prosperity (or security) be unto.'

7. *In virtute tua*: from the parallelism in the Hebrew we should have here, 'within thy walls.' *Virtus* (δύναμις) is often used rather inappropriately to render the Hebrew *ḥayil*—a word of very varying meaning.

In turribus tuis ; the Hebrew suggests rather palaces than towers. The reference to walls and palaces excludes the possibility of regarding this psalm as a song of the returning exiles. It is possible that we should take the " walls " and " palaces " as the city walls and the towers for defence thereon. *Cf.* Ps. xlvii. 13, 14 ; 3 Kings xvi. 18.

8. The Hebrew has : ' For the sake of my brethren and neighbours, I would speak of peace in thee.' When he thinks of his brethren and friends in the Holy City, he cannot refrain from wishing to Jerusalem peace : whenever he speaks of Jerusalem he has ' peace ' on his lips.

9. But the Temple is, above all and beyond all, the ground of his solicitude for Jerusalem. As the psalm had begun with a description of the psalmist's joy at the tidings that he was about to see the House of Yahweh, so it ends with the thought that the City of Peace must ever remain secure, because the Lord has chosen it for His dwelling. That which the psalmist chiefly longed to see in Jerusalem—the Temple—is also the object of his chief solicitude in prayer. As long as the House of Yahweh stands in the midst of Jerusalem the Holy City will remain secure.

PSALM CXXII

OCULUS SPERANS

THE psalmist compares the attitude of Israel towards the Lord with that of slaves towards their owners. When the master of the house is angry, his slaves watch anxiously the threatening gestures of his hands, and when her mistress is angry, the slave-girl keeps her eyes fixed, likewise, on the hands of her mistress. When the anger passes, and master or mistress relents, the slaves watch eagerly for the gesture of beckoning kindness. So, now that Yahweh is angry, Israel watches with painful anxiety for the movements of His threatening hand, and begs for a gesture of favour. Long, all too long, has Israel suffered from the oppression and contempt of arrogant and insolent strangers. Let Yahweh at length forget His anger, and be gracious! Then at last will Israel have rest from the tension of long years of humiliation and uncertainty.

The psalm does not readily accommodate itself to any theory of the 'Gradual Psalms' above described. Yet, as a humble, earnest prayer for help against foreign contempt and oppression long endured, it could well have been used on many different occasions, as a pilgrimage song, as a caravan song, or as a prayer in the Temple liturgy, etc.

It is, probably, best understood as a product of the post-Exilic (possibly the Persian) period.

Canticum graduum.

1. Ad te levavi oculos meos, qui habitas in cœlis.
2. Ecce sicut oculi servorum, in manibus dominorum suorum,
Sicut oculi ancillæ in manibus dominæ suæ: ita oculi nostri ad Dominum Deum nostrum, donec misereatur nostri.

3. Miserere nostri Domine, miserere nostri: quia multum repleti sumus despectione:
4. Quia multum repleta est anima nostra: opprobrium abundantibus, et despectio superbis.

A Gradual Psalm

1. Unto Thee I lift up my eyes
Thou that dwellest in heaven.
2. As the eyes of slaves,
On the hands of their master;
As the eyes of a slave-girl
On the hands of her mistress;
So are our eyes on Yahweh, our God,
Until He showeth us mercy.

3. Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us,
For we are sated with shame!
4. Yea, more than sated is our soul,
With the mockery of the rich,
And the contempt of the proud.

1. *Cf.* Ps. cxx. 1.

The 'to Thee' is in the emphatic position at the beginning: to God alone the psalmist can look for help.

2. The suggestion here is obviously not of the tense eagerness with which slaves watch their owners' hands for gifts, since the psalm represents God as angry with His people. The hands which the slaves watch so intently are the hands whose gesture threatens chastisement. The slaves, in dread lest the threatened blows should fall, plead piteously for mercy. With the humility of verse 2 we may compare Ps. cxxx.

From the circumstance that only one female slave is mentioned it might, perhaps, be inferred that it was customary in Hebrew homes to have many male slaves, and only one female slave.

3. The repetition of the prayer indicates its earnestness. For the *multum*, *cf.* Ps. cxix. 6.

4. *Opprobrium* and *despectio* are, according to the Hebrew, the things with which the soul of Israel is sated. Hence we ought to have in the Latin something like van Sante's version:

Affatim saturata sibi est anima nostra
Subsannatione securorum, contemptu elatorum.

The Greeks took the second part of the verse as a curse: "Let there be contempt for the wealthy, and mockery for the proud." The Hebrew word rendered *abundantes* in the Vulgate means 'care-free,' 'they who have naught to complain of.' Some of the older commentators (*e.g.*, Theodoret) identify the 'insolent' with the Babylonians, thus referring the psalm to the Exile. It is more likely, however, that the psalm belongs to the post-Exilic period, and that the 'care-free' and 'arrogant' are the Persians. The possibility cannot be excluded, however, that the mockers and oppressors of the psalmist are themselves Hebrews. In that case the psalm would be more naturally understood as an individual, not a communal, psalm.

PSALM CXXIII

A SONG OF THANKSGIVING

THIS psalm is a song of thanksgiving. A great crisis in the life of Israel has safely passed, and the nation gives thanks for its rescue. The danger with which the nation has been threatened is likened to the fierce onslaught of a raging monster, to the fury of a swollen wady, and, to the might of an overwhelming flood

In the second part of the psalm (5–7) the thanksgiving of the people is chanted. Yahweh has not abandoned Israel to the fangs of the monster that threatened it. Israel is now like a bird that has escaped from the snare of the fowler, and the ecstasy of her new sense of freedom finds expression in the joyous cry : " We are free."

In the final verse the psalmist ascribes the blessing of rescue to Yahweh alone. In its need the people had called on the name of Yahweh, and the might of that name had wrought deliverance. For what power can withstand the Creator of heaven and earth ?

The psalm is ascribed to David in the Massoretic text, but it is likely that the poem is post-Exilic, and that the danger from which Israel has been rescued was that of the Babylonian Exile,

1. Canticum graduum.

Nisi quia Dominus erat in nobis, dicat nunc Israel :
2. Nisi quia Dominus erat in nobis,
Cum exsurgerent homines in nos.
3. Forte vivos deglutissent nos :
Cum irasceretur furor eorum in nos,
4. Forsitan aqua absorbuisset nos.
5. Torrentem pertransivit anima nostra : forsitan pertransisset anima nostra aquam intolerabilem.

6. Benedictus Dominus qui non dedit nos, in captionem dentibus eorum.
7. Anima nostra sicut passer erepta est de laqueo venantium :
Laqueus contritus est, et nos liberati sumus.

1. A Gradual Psalm.

If the Lord had not been with us—
Thus let Israel say—
2. If the Lord had not been with us,
When men rose against us,

3. They would have swallowed us alive,
When their anger raged against us.

4. The water would surely have overwhelmed us ;
5. Our soul would have had to traverse a torrent ;
Our soul would have traversed a headlong flood.

6. Blessed be the Lord who gave us not up
As prey to their teeth.

7. Our life was rescued like a bird
From the snare of the fowler.
Broken was the snare, and we are free.

8. Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini: qui fecit cœlum et terram.	8. Our help is in the name of Yahweh, The Maker of heaven and earth!

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1. This psalm is not peculiarly suited to be either a caravan song or a song for pilgrimages. Yet it might have been either. Every visit to Jerusalem must have helped to remind travellers and pilgrims of the wonderful deliverance of Israel from the Exile in Babylon. Every one who arrived at Jerusalem in the post-Exilic period was following, in a sense, in the footsteps of the Exiles who had been so wonderfully brought back to their home.

Nisi quia . . . erat=nisi fuisset. Cf. Ps. xciii. 17. The ὅτι (*quia*) is pleonastic.

The psalm is probably to be regarded as arranged for antiphonal singing. The first four verses were sung alternately by two choirs, and verse 5 was then divided between the choirs. Verses 6 and 7 lend themselves to antiphonal rendering and verse 8 was probably sung by the whole body of chanters.

3. The enemies are compared to a furious monster—possibly a sea-monster (as in Jer. li. 34). The thought of a sea-monster leads on, then, naturally to the idea of a raging torrent and a headlong flood.

4. Misery and misfortune are frequently symbolised by overwhelming floods. *Cf.* Ps. xvii. 17; lxviii. 3, 16. In Is. viii. 8 the invasion of Assyria is represented as an overflow of the Euphrates which inundates all the land of Juda. Some modern commentators discover in this symbolism by which Babylon is represented by a flood, traces of the story of the struggle between Tiamat and Marduk—the enemy of Yahweh's people appearing naturally as Tiamat, the Abyss. The sea-monster of verse 3, according to this type of explanation, would be another form of Tiamat, or Chaos. It is, however, very unlikely that the author of this poem derived any of his *motifs* from the Babylonian Epic of Marduk. The rescue of Israel from peril has nothing corresponding to it in the Babylonian poem.

5. The Latin *pertransivit anima nostra* inverts the relation of subject and object as it stands in the Hebrew. In the Massoretic text we have: "A torrent (*i.e.*, a wady which has become a raging flood through the melting of the snows) would have swept over us." The Greek translators evidently missed the preposition *'al* ('over') before *naphshenu* ('our soul'). In his own translation Jerome has: *Torrens transisset super animam nostram.*

Forsitan pertransisset anima nostra aquam intolerabilem: here again the Greeks changed subject into object and *vice versa* through the omission of the Hebrew preposition *'al.* Jerome renders correctly: *Forsitan transissent super animam nostram aquae superbae.*

Intolerabilem represents the Greek ἀνυπόστατον,—which could also mean 'out of one's depth' (*cf.* Ps. lxviii. 3). In the Hebrew the waters are called 'proud' (*cf.* Job xxxviii. 11), because the psalmist is thinking rather of the enemies symbolised by the waters than of the waters themselves.

6. *Captio,* 'prey,' 'booty.' The thought of the monster of verse 3 is here resumed.

7. *Laqueus*: the snare, or trap (*paḥ*) used for catching birds consisted of two frames of wood fastened together like the covers of a book, and having attached to them a piece of netting. The frames shot together when the bird trod on the bait, and the bird remained enclosed in the net. By breaking the frames, or by rending the net, the captive bird would be released. Here again the psalmist passes easily from the symbol to the thing symbolised: "The net is broken, and *we* (not the bird) are free!" For the comparison of the soul with a bird compare Ps. x. 1.

9. When they were in straits the people had called loudly on the name of Yahweh. The name itself contained a guarantee of help—for it was the Covenant-name of the God of Israel, and its use in supplication might be supposed to remind God of His Covenant. The loud crying of the name in the presence of the heathen would also put pressure, as it were, on Yahweh to carry out all that His name implied. The words of verse 8 occur with extraordinary frequency in the Church's Liturgy. They precede the *Confiteor* in the Mass and the Divine Office, and they are the introduction to all liturgical blessings, and form part of the usual blessing given by a Bishop. And it is usual to accompany these words with the sign of the Cross, as if to imply that the help of God, which we ask for, is guaranteed to us and procured for us by the death of Christ on Calvary. Calvary and the ancient Covenant of Sinai are connected as the substance and the shadow, and when we declare, while making the sign of the Cross, that our help is in the name of the Lord, we wish, in our way to put pressure, as it were, on God to grant us the fruits of Calvary—to fulfil towards us all that is implied in the new Covenant in Christ's blood.

PSALM CXXIV

TRUST IN THE LORD

THE man who trusts in the Lord is as firmly fixed and immovable as Sion, the Mountain of God. Storms of oppression, and tribulation may sweep over him, but they will leave him unchanged. And as he who trusts in Yahweh is like Mount Sion, so is Yahweh Himself like the hills which tower up round about Jerusalem like a protecting wall. The hills stand round about the Holy City ; so does the protection of Yahweh encircle His servants, making them secure against misfortune.

For the moment, indeed, it seems far otherwise in Jerusalem. The rule of godless strangers is felt in the Holy City, and the people of Yahweh are oppressed. But that cannot last. Canaan is the allotted portion of Yahweh's worshippers : it has been assigned to them by Yahweh Himself. The strangers are godless, and God cannot permit the rule of the godless to continue in the land of the just. Besides, if Yahweh now refused help, His servants would be tempted to lose faith, and to ally themselves with the godless. Let Yahweh, therefore, intervene quickly, and overthrow the rule of the strangers. And let Him make the hypocrites who claim to be true Israelites and yet favour the heathen, share in the fate of the godless.

The general situation here implied is like that described in Nehem. xiii. 23*ff*. The psalmist seeks to rouse the people to enthusiastic confidence in God at a time when everything seems to foster despair, when even pious Israelites are tempted to abandon belief in the value of virtue. The style of the psalm, no less than the political situation which it implies, points to the post-Exilic period as the date of its composition.

It cannot well be said of this psalm that it was peculiarly suitable to be sung by pilgrims or other wayfarers.

1. Canticum graduum.

Qui confidunt in Domino, sicut mons Sion : non commovebitur in æternum,

2. Qui habitat in Jerusalem. Montes in circuitu eius: et Dominus in circuitu populi sui, ex hoc nunc et usque in sæculum.

3. Quia non relinquet Dominus virgam peccatorum super

1. A Gradual Psalm.

They who trust in the Lord,
Are like Mt. Sion, that is immovable,
That abideth for ever.

2. Round about Jerusalem are the hills :
And Yahweh is round about His people,
Henceforth and for ever !

3. For the Lord will not permit the sceptre of the godless to rest

sortem justorum: ut non extendant justi ad iniquitatem manus suas.

On the allotted portion of the just,
Lest the just should put forth
To iniquity their hands.

4. Benefac Domine bonis, et rectis corde.
5. Declinantes autem in obligationes adducet Dominus cum operantibus iniquitatem: pax super Israel.

4. Deal kindly, O Lord, with the good,
And with the upright of heart.
5. But those who turn aside to treachery,
The Lord will lead away with the evil-doers.

Peace be upon Israel!

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1. *Non commovebitur*: this is, like *in æternum qui habitat*, an epithet of Mt. Sion. The Mountain of God was the type of all that was unchangeable and abiding: as the Holy Mountain on which God's dwelling stood it was more immovable than other mountains (*cf.* Is. xiv. 32; xxviii. 16; Ps. xlv. 6; lxxxvi. 5). The man who truly trusts in God is as firm and as permanent as Sion. *Qui habitat*= *qui manet.*

2. *In Jerusalem*: this is not to be read with the foregoing, as in the usual Vulgate text. There is no reference in the original text to 'him that dwells in Jerusalem.' It is not likely that the psalmist would say that the man who trusts in God is as permanent as God Himself. The preposition *in* should be omitted: there is nothing corresponding to it in the Hebrew text. Apparently the Greeks read *yoshebh*, 'who dwelleth,' instead of *yeshebh*, 'will abide,' and then connected *yoshebh* with *Jerusalem* so as to get the sense, 'who dwelleth in Jerusalem.' The literal sense of the Hebrew here is: "Jerusalem—round about it are the hills." Jerusalem is protected by the hills which encircle it, In like fashion are the people of Israel encircled and protected by Yahweh. *Cf.* Zach. ii. 9 *ff.*

Ex hoc nunc, etc.: for the substantive use of *nunc* (*cf.* Ps. cxii. 2; cxiii. 18; cxx. 8; cxxx. 3). The Lord is the shield of His people for ever.

3. It follows from the preceding verse that the present oppression of Israel by foreigners cannot last for long. The Hebrew has: 'The sceptre of iniquity shall not rest on the lot of the just': the Greeks read *lo' yaniaḥ*, 'he (that is, Yahweh) shall not allow to rest,' instead of the Massoretic *lo' yanuaḥ*, 'it (the sceptre) shall not rest.' Instead of the Massoretic *haresha'*, iniquity, the Greeks read *harasha'*, 'the godless.'

The *sors justorum*=the land of Palestine. The rule of the heathen over Palestine cannot be permitted to persist.[1] Besides, if that rule

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[1] *Cf.* Ecclu. xxxv. 22:

Yea, the Lord will not tarry
And the Mighty One will not refrain Himself,
Till He smite the loins of the merciless,
And requite vengeance to the arrogant,
Till He dispossess the sceptre of pride
And the staff of wickedness utterly cut down.

were allowed to continue for a much longer period, the just (the Israelites) might begin to lose faith in Yahweh and His promises, and might ultimately accept the point of view of the godless heathen. As Theodoret puts it : ' Lest those who were zealous for virtue, seeing all things to be devoid of order and rule, should turn to that which is evil and thence procure hurt for themselves.'

4. God is asked to show marked favour to the good who are upright of heart, *i.e.*, those who are good out of conviction, the genuine Israelites.

5. Over against the honest Israelites are the *declinantes in obligationes*. *Obligationes* renders στραγγυλία, which can mean a tight knot, and then a knotted or twisted cord, and then twisted things generally, such as snares and treacheries. Bellarmine says : *Nihil dubito quin latinus interpres scripserit obligationes, non tam respiciens ad rem quae ligatur et stringitur per obligationem quam ad ipsam obliquitatem et tortuositatem quae cernitur in fune dum aliquid ligatur.* The Hebrew has : ' they who turn aside their twisted paths,' so that both Latin and Hebrew agree in the concrete meaning, ' they who give themselves unto crookedness.' The reference is obviously to the dishonest Israelites who, while professing to be loyal to the Torah of Yahweh, were friendly and helpful to the strangers. These the psalmist prays God to deal with, as He will deal with the godless heathen themselves.

Pax super Israel : this sounds like the priestly blessing with which the psalm would have been brought to a close in the Liturgy.

PSALM CXXV

SEED-TIME OF TEARS BRINGS HARVEST OF GLADNESS

WHEN the Jewish Exiles in Babylon were told that Cyrus had set them free, it seemed to them that the message of their freedom was no more trustworthy than the visions of a dream. When at length they saw that the tidings were true, and that they were indeed free to return to the home-land, their joy knew no bounds; "their mouth was filled with their laughter and their tongue with rejoicing." And even the Babylonians joined with them in confessing the greatness of the deeds by which Yahweh had fulfilled His promises to His people. Full of hope and enthusiasm those of the Exiles who took advantage of the edict of Cyrus set forth on their journey to Judea. But their idealistic enthusiasm did not long survive their home-coming. It was with difficulty that the people of Jerusalem were induced to complete the restoration of the Temple, and for nearly half a century after the completion of the Second Temple the walls of Jerusalem and, no doubt, many of the buildings of the city also, were allowed to lie in ruins. The century that followed the Return from Exile was full of bitterness and disillusionment.

It is the purpose of Ps. cxxv to contrast the joy of the first days of the Return with the gloom and hopelessness of half a century later. The psalmist looks on the deliverance from Exile as still incomplete. The Edict of Cyrus had marked a great turning-point in the life of Israel. God has not fulfilled the hopes which had inevitably arisen when that turning-point was passed: Israel is no happier than she was, when in Exile. The promises which had seemed to be fulfilled are now in fact no nearer to realisation than they were before the Edict of Cyrus. Hence the psalmist prays: "Do Thou, O Lord, complete the work of the Deliverance from Babylon! Change our present bitter lot! As the rains of autumn and winter fill again the wadys of the south, so do Thou change our ill fortune: and as the wadys are transformed from barren, silent trenches and arid tracks among the rocks into rushing and teeming brooks and torrents that dash noisily on, so let Israel be filled again with life and energy! Things cannot remain for ever as they are. Seed-time of tears brings harvest of joy, and the seed-time of Israel has lasted from the Exile until now. Soon, then, must come the harvest of rejoicing!" Thus the psalmist speaks, like another Aggaeus, or another Zachary.

This psalm was probably chanted antiphonally, one choir singing verses 1–3, and another verses 4–5. Sung thus antiphonally, it would have been suitable for use on caravan journeys—whether for trade or pilgrimage.

1. Canticum graduum.

In convertendo Dominus captivitatem Sion: facti sumus sicut consolati:
2. Tunc repletum est gaudio os nostrum: et lingua nostra exsultatione.
Tunc dicent inter Gentes: Magnificavit Dominus facere cum eis.
3. Magnificavit Dominus facere nobiscum: facti sumus lætantes.

4. Converte Domine captivitatem nostram, sicut torrens in Austro.
5. Qui seminant in lacrimis, in exsultatione metent.
6. Euntes ibant et flebant, mittentes semina sua.
Venientes autem venient cum exsultatione, portantes manipulos suos.

1. A Gradual Psalm.

When the Lord changed the bondage of Sion,
We were like those that dream:
2. Then was our mouth full of joyous shouting,
And our tongue of rejoicing:
Then was it said among the heathen:
"Great things hath Yahweh wrought for them."
3. Yea, great things had Yahweh wrought for us;
We were glad indeed!

4. Change, O Lord, our lot,
Like the wady in the south-land.

5. They who sow amid tears reap with joy

6. Weeping men go, strewing the seed:
Rejoicing they return,
Bearing their sheaves.

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1. *In convertendo Dominus captivitatem*: for the extraordinary grammar see Introd. p. xlv. It is disputed whether *capitivitas* is a correct rendering of the Hebrew *shibhath* (or *sh^e^bhith*). The Hebrew word is used in many contexts where it cannot well be rendered 'captivity.' Yet it must be admitted that, whether *captivitas* is, or is not, an exact rendering of the word here, the immediate reference is to the position of the exiles in Babylon. The word usually means 'lot' or 'turning,' the 'lot' here in question being the bondage of Israel in Babylonia. In verse 4 below, where the same Hebrew word refers to the condition of the Exiles who had returned to Judea, the rendering *captivitas* is practically unjustifiable. It can be justified only on the supposition which is advanced by several commentators, that the psalmist in the second part of this psalm is praying for the return from Babylonia of the Exiles who had refused to return in the three or four decades which followed the Edict of Cyrus. On this view the mournful background of verses 4–6 would be due mainly to the refusal of a number of exiled Judeans to rejoin their countrymen in the home-land; the psalmist's prayer would then be primarily

uttered to bring about such change in the mentality of his absentee countrymen as would lead them to throw in their lot with those who had returned to Jerusalem. This view of the meaning of the psalm is not accepted in the introduction above. For *captivitas* compare Ps. xiii. 7 ; lxxxiv. 2.

Consolati : the Hebrew, *ḥol^e^mim* means, more probably, ' dreamers,' *somniantes* (Jerome). The Hebrew verb *ḥlm* can mean either ' to be healthy,' or ' to dream.' It is possible that the Greeks were induced by the first of these meanings to translate παρακεκλημένοι (*consolati*). The sense ' dreamers ' suits the context better. The Exiles could not believe that they were really free : they were dazed, like men in a dream ; or they thought the tidings of their freedom to be the product, as it were, of a dream. Kimchi says that the meaning is, that when the Exiles realised that they were free, the sufferings of the Exile began to appear to them as a sort of unpleasant dream.

2. *Gaudio* : the Hebrew has ' laughter ' : *cf.* Job viii. 21. The Exiles could not refrain from shouts and songs of joy.

The Babylonians were deeply impressed by the change in the fortunes of the Exiles and ascribed it directly to Yahweh.

Dicent, ' men were saying.' *Magnificavit facere* is a Hebrew construction : *cf.* Introd. p. xlv *f.*

3. The Exiles applied to themselves the words of the heathen.

4. The sense is : May the Lord help us now as He did at the end of the Exile. Let Him change our lot (*captivitas* cannot mean ' bondage ' here), as the bed of the wady is filled by the autumn rains, after the drought of the summer. The comparison with the winter-flowing wady is intended to bring out the greatness of the change which is required in the condition of the people. The bed of the wady becomes utterly dried up in summer—a thing of silence and death. But when the first rains of autumn come, the wady springs to sparkling life as a wayward, tumbling, hurrying stream. So the psalmist would have the sluggishness of Israel's present hopeless existence transformed into the joyous energy of bustling and healthy life. It may be, as some commentators suggest, that the waters which give life to the wady of the south-land are intended to symbolise energising streams of grace from Yahweh ; but it is unwise to press the comparison with the *torrens in austro* too far.

5. This verse may be taken as the statement of the general principle (in what may have been proverbial form) that suffering is the necessary prelude to happiness.

6. *Euntes ibant et flebant,* and *venientes venient* are constructions based directly on the Hebrew. The tears of the seed-time were the sorrows of the Exile. If the harvest of gladness has not yet appeared, it is, nevertheless, sure to come. In the joy of harvest-time, the toil of the spring-time and the anxious watching of the early summer are

both forgotten. It has been conjectured that verse 6 is in some way dependent on Amos ix. 13–15 :

> Behold, days are coming,—so speaketh Yahweh—
> When the ploughman shall hustle the reaper,
> And the grape-treader him that streweth the seed,
> And the mountains shall trickle with sweet-wine,
> And all the hills shall run melting.
> And I will change the lot of my people Israel,
> And they shall build the ruined cities, and dwell there,
> And they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof,
> And they shall lay out gardens and eat the fruit thereof.
> And I will plant them in their land ;
> And they shall not again be plucked out of their land
> Which I have given them :
> Yahweh thy God hath said it.

The phrase which describes the strewing of the seed in this passage of Amos appears also in verse 6 of this psalm, and in the Amos-text and Ps. cxxv the changing of Israel's lot is a prominent *motif*. It has been suggested also that the re-building of ruined cities in the Amos-passage may have led to the grouping of Ps. cxxvi in close connection with Ps. cxxv.

PSALM CXXVI

ON THE BLESSING OF THE LORD ALL SUCCESS DEPENDS

THIS psalm obviously consists of two parts, verses 1–2 and verses 3–5. These parts are so different in theme and outlook that many modern commentators regard them as distinct poems. The first part deals after the fashion of Prov. x. 22 with the absolute necessity of God's blessing for the success of men's work. Toil, apart from the divine blessing, is futile. On the other hand God grants favours at times to His friends, out of all relation to toil—even while they sleep. We have here the Old Testament counterpart to Matt. vi. 25*ff*.

The second part of the psalm is a meditation on one of the greatest of God's free gifts—a numerous progeny of sons. To the father who has begotten many sons in his youth, the sons become as arrows in the soldier's quiver. The man who has his quiver well filled with arrows of this kind is free from anxiety when he has to seek legal redress, or enter into important contracts, at the city gate. His enemies will not seek to cheat or outwit the man who comes attended with a strong bodyguard of sturdy sons.

The ascription of the psalm to Solomon is due probably in the first place to the reference to the building of the house, and then to the phrase, ' He giveth it to His beloved ones in sleep '—for Nathan, according to 2 Kings xii. 25, gave to Solomon the name Yedidyah, ' Beloved of Yahweh,' and in 3 Kings iii. 5–15 we are told that God gave to Solomon the gift of wisdom in a dream, *i.e.*, while he slept.

1. Canticum graduum Salomonis.

1. A Gradual Psalm of Solomon.

Nisi Dominus ædificaverit domum, in vanum laboraverunt qui ædificant eam.
Nisi Dominus custodierit civitatem, frustra vigilat qui custodit eam.

If the Lord build not the house,
'Tis in vain that the builders toil :
If the Lord guard not the city,
'Tis in vain that the guards keep watch :

2. Vanum est vobis ante lucem surgere : surgite postquam sederitis, qui manducatis panem doloris.
Cum dederit dilectis suis somnum :

2. It is futile for you to rise before the dawn—
Even if you rise when ye have scarcely rested,
Ye who eat the bread of sorrow !
For He giveth (it) to His loved ones even while they sleep !

3. Ecce hæreditas Domini filii : merces, fructus ventris.

3. Behold, a gift from the Lord are sons :
A reward is the fruit of the womb.

4. Sicut sagittæ in manu potentis : ita filii excussorum.
5. Beatus vir qui implevit desiderium suum ex ipsis : non confundetur cum loquetur inimicis suis in porta.

4. Like arrows in the strong man's hand
Are the sons of youth ;
5. Happy is the man who filleth his quiver therewith :
He shall not be brought to shame,
When he speaketh with his adversaries in the gate !

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1. For ascription to Solomon see Introduction above.

2. Toil is useless without the help and blessing of the Lord.

Surgite postquam sederitis : taking the Vulgate as it stands we can understand it only in some fashion like that suggested in the translation above. *Surgite* is there taken concessively—' Even if ye rise ' ; but the Latin is here very imperfect. The Hebrew means : ' 'Tis futile for you to hasten your rising, and to make late your resting : ye eat the bread of weariness, but He giveth (bread) to His loved ones in sleep.' The Greeks evidently took *m^e'aḥ^are-shebheth,* ' making late resting ' as if it were *me'aḥar shebheth,* ' after resting ' : the *ḳum* (' rising ') of the Hebrew text they must have read twice. The sense of the verse is quite clear. It is perfectly useless to toil, unless God's help is with us. Not merely is toil useless as such for success, since it cannot win it alone ; it is also, at times, altogether superfluous, for God gives the things for which men toil to His special friends, even when they are resting in sleep. *Somnum* must be taken, after the Hebrew, as=' during sleep.' The gift of wisdom granted to Yedidyah, ' the Beloved of Yahweh ' while he slept, has been mentioned above in the introduction to this psalm. There is here, of course, no recommendation of idleness : the psalmist wishes merely to reprove the folly of anxious toil from worldly motives. We must seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and all these things will be added unto us.

3. *Hæreditas Domini,* something which belongs altogether to the Lord, and which He gives, therefore, of His own good pleasure. Sons are a gift received directly from God ; they are therefore *God's* inheritance—not something inherited from men.

Merces, a reward—not, of course, in the sense of a salary for work done—for then we should have a sort of contradiction with the first part of the verse. For the thought that children are a *sakhar,* or *merces,* compare Gen. xxx. 18 ; Jer. xxxi. 15–17.

Potentis, Hebrew, *gibbor*=' warrior.'

Excussorum : this word has been explained as meaning ' robust,' ' able to shake enemies off.' The Hebrew *n^e'urim* could *per se* mean either *excussi* or ' youth ' (see Introd. p. xli) ; obviously the latter meaning ought to be accepted here. Sons begotten in youth are fully grown up before their father is old. The comparison of sons, or supporters, with arrows is familiar in the East. The Arabs call a

trustworthy man ' the best arrow in my quiver,' and brave sons ' the lance-points of their fathers'.'

5. *Implevit desiderium* : this should mean, ' Lucky is he who has sons that fulfil his expectations,' or, ' Lucky is he who has as many sons as he desires.' But the Hebrew is better : ' Happy is the man who has filled his quiver therewith '—*i.e.*, with the arrows=sons. The Greeks appear to have misread the Hebrew word '*ashpatho*, ' his quiver.'

The gate was the chief gathering-place of Oriental towns. At the gate the law was administered and all important negotiations carried through. Obviously a strong bodyguard of sturdy sons would help to secure for their father fair play when he had to deal with rivals, at the gate.

PSALM CXXVII

THE BLESSINGS OF HOME

IN this little psalm we have a picture of the home-life which was the ideal of the Hebrew people. The head of the home is a God-fearing toilsome man who, by labour of his own hands on his farm, is able to support in comfort his wife and his many sons. His wife is the 'woman of valour' of Proverbs; her heart is fixed on her house: she does not gad abroad but spends her life in the inner parts of the house. She has borne so many sons that she is likened to a fruitful vine. When the family sits round the board, the sons are like so many young olive trees that grow up around that fruitful olive, their father.

Peaceful home and prosperous living are the blessings with which those who fear the Lord are rewarded. But the peace and prosperity of home-life are possible, only if there is order and the fear of God in the land generally. Hence the psalmist prays that national peace may be graciously granted by Yahweh, so that the honest Hebrew paterfamilias may go on living in undisturbed tranquillity in his home, until he sees the children of his children.

The psalm might well be understood as an elaborate greeting of one caravan to another—a sort of acknowledgment on the part of each that the wealth of the other was a token of the friendship of the Lord. The last words of the psalm—'Peace upon Israel'—would be a very suitable form of greeting to one another of Hebrews meeting, or parting, in foreign lands.

1. Canticum graduum.

Beati omnes, qui timent Dominum, qui ambulant in viis ejus.
2. Labores manuum tuarum quia manducabis: beatus es, et bene tibi erit.
3. Uxor tua sicut vitis abundans, in lateribus domus tuæ.
Filii tui sicut novellæ olivarum, in circuitu mensæ tuæ.

4. Ecce sic benedicetur homo, qui timet Dominum.
5. Benedicat tibi Dominus ex Sion: et videas bona Jerusalem omnibus diebus vitæ tuæ.
6. Et videas filios filiorum tuorum, pacem super Israel.

1. A Caravan Song.

Blessed are all who fear the Lord,
Who walk in His paths:

2. The labour of thy hands thou shalt eat:
Happy art thou: it is well with thee.

3. Thy wife is like a fruitful vine,
In the inmost parts of thy house:
Thy sons are like shoots of the olive,
Round about thy board.

4. Yea, thus is he blessed,
Who feareth the Lord.
5. May the Lord bless thee from Sion:
Mayest thou see the weal of Jerusalem,
All the days of thy life.
6. Mayest thou see thy children's children.
Peace be on Israel!

2. *Quia manducabis*: the *quia* renders here the asseverative *ki*= 'truly,' or 'indeed.'

Manducare labores manuum='to eat of the product of one's toil.' For the Hebrew mind there was a peculiar satisfaction in feeling that one was quite independent of others for one's maintenance. To eat of the fruit of one's own toil was so much an ideal of Hebrew life that every Hebrew youth was expected to learn a trade—even if he were the child of wealthy parents, or were intended for a learned career, so that he might always be able to support himself. Hence we find St. Paul claiming that, even when he was spending himself in preaching the Gospel in Ephesus, he was not dependent on any man for his support, but on his own hands alone (Acts xx. 34). The good fortune which the psalmist here extols is not the possession of wealth as such, but the happiness and comfort which belong to a life of honest effort for one's self and one's own. The psalmist would no doubt gladly accept the formula of the prayer in Prov. xxx. 8:

> "Remove far from me falsehood and lies;
> Give me neither poverty nor riches;
> Feed me with mine allotted bread."

3. The God-fearing man who supports himself by his own toil will receive two great favours from the Lord, a diligent and prudent wife, and a numerous progeny of sons.

Vitis abundans: the point of the comparison is the fruitful motherhood of the wife.

In lateribus: this represents the Hebrew *b^e^yark^e^the*, which really means *in penetralibus*: in Amos vi. 10 *yark^e^the habbayith* certainly means 'the interior parts of the house.' The idea, which the Vulgate text may suggest to many, of a vine trained on the walls of the house, is not suitable in the context. The good and prudent wife holds herself aloof from the outer world, and keeps to the women's apartments; she is interested only in the welfare of her family and domestics. It is one of the chief charms of the Oriental woman that she keep herself constantly in the privacy of her own house. The contrary type of woman is strikingly depicted in chapters 7 and 9 of Proverbs: she is "riotous and rebellious; her feet abide not in her own house."

Novellæ olivarum: the Hebrew means rather young olive trees than shoots of olive.

4. The Hebrew *ki* ('= verily') is omitted in the Vulgate.

5. From Sion, where He dwells, the Lord sends forth His blessing. (*cf.* Ps. cxxxiii. 3). *Videas . . . tuæ* is regarded by some commentators as an interpolation, the marginal note of a reader. But a prayer for the permanent welfare of the Holy City fits in well with

the general attitude of the psalm. The peace of home-life depends largely on national peace.

6. *Pacem*: in the original, *shalom*, 'peace' is not dependent on 'see.' The clause should run, as in Ps. cxxiv. 5: *Pax super Israel*. This would be a natural greeting for Hebrews meeting each other in foreign lands.

PSALM CXXVIII

EVER OPPRESSED, BUT NEVER O'ERTHROWN

THIS psalm closely resembles Ps. cxxiii. It is a song of thanksgiving for the protection which Israel has always received from the Lord, and a prayer for the destruction of all the enemies of Sion. It consists of two parts, vv. 1–4 and 5–8: in the first part the psalmist looks back over the history of Israel and finds it to be one long record of foreign oppression. Egyptians, Canaanites, Philistines, Syrians, Assyrians, Babylonians have followed each other in almost uninterrupted succession, and have ploughed, as it were, great furrows on the back of Israel. But in the mighty help of Yahweh Israel has survived all the oppression and malice of her foes; and as she has ever been succoured and protected in the past, so will she be guarded and sustained in the future, for her help and stay is the Just One in heaven.

The recollection of Israel's wrongs rouses the anger of the psalmist, and in the second part of the psalm he prays for the destruction of all the enemies of Sion. He does not ask for them, however, such a dread punishment as Ps. cxxxvi invokes upon Babel; he prays merely that the enemies of Sion may become like the grass which grows on the flat house-tops of Palestine or the corn-seeds which sprout there. When the grass, or the corn, on the house-tops first appears, it is abundant and vigorous, but as the power of the sun increases and the rains gradually cease, the grass and corn wither away. No reaper ever fills his hand therewith, and no binder ever gathers together the sheaves thereof, and never are the cheerful greetings of the harvesters heard at their ingathering. So may it be with the enemies of Sion!

1. Canticum graduum.

Sæpe expugnaverunt me a juventute mea, dicat nunc Israel:
2. Sæpe expugnaverunt me a juventute mea: etenim non potuerunt mihi.
3. Supra dorsum meum fabricaverunt peccatores: prolongaverunt iniquitatem suam.
4. Dominus justus concidit cervices peccatorum:

1. A Gradual Psalm.

Greatly have they oppressed me from my youth—
So may Israel say,
2. Greatly have they oppressed me from my youth:
Yet they have not prevailed against me.
3. On my back have sinners wrought;
Long have they worked their malice.

4. The Lord is just,
He hath cleft the neck of sinners.

5. Confundantur et convertantur retrorsum omnes, qui oderunt Sion.
6. Fiant sicut fœnum tectorum: quod priusquam evellatur, exaruit:
7. De quo non implevit manum suam qui metit, et sinum suum qui manipulos colligit.
8. Et non dixerunt qui præteribant: Benedictio Domini super vos: benediximus vobis in nomine Domini.

5. May they be brought to shame and driven backwards—
All who hate Sion.
6. May they become as grass on the house-tops,
Which before it is gathered withereth;
7. Wherewith the reaper filleth not his hand,
Nor the binder his bosom;
8. And the passers-by speak not:
"Yahweh's blessing be on you;
We bless you in the name of Yahweh."

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1. The 'youth' is the beginning of Israel's life as a nation at the Exodus. The subjects to *expugnaverunt* are the various national enemies of Israel from the Exodus down to the Exile.

Dicat nunc Israel: Israel is called on to acknowledge that its trials have not overcome her.

2. The repetition is intended to indicate the depth of feeling with which Israel recalls her troubled past.

Etenim: this particle may be taken in an adversative sense—'yet.'

Non potuerunt mihi: this is a literal rendering of the Hebrew *lo' yakh^elu li*, 'they have not prevailed against me.' Even though the persecutions which oppressed Israel in Egypt have been continued in some form throughout her history, yet they have not been able to break her spirit, or destroy her.

3. The oppression of Israel's foes is likened in the Hebrew text to the ploughing of long furrows on the back of Israel. The Hebrew text runs:

On my back the ploughers have ploughed;
Long have they made their furrows.

Israel is compared to a tillage-field which the oppressors have ploughed with their sharp plough-shares. The psalmist thinks of the land of Palestine and its people as one, and the battle-torn land is for him like the stripe-torn back of a slave. The stranger oppressors 'have made long their furrows,' for they have left practically no part of the land untouched.

Fabricaverunt: the Greek translators took the Hebrew verb *ḥar^eshu*, 'they have ploughed' as if it meant (as in another context it might) 'they have wrought' (in the sense of working in metal): but the sense 'they have ploughed,' is here certain.

Peccatores: the Greeks read *ḥor^eshim*, 'the ploughers,' as *har^e-sha'im*, 'the godless,' or perhaps they identified *ḥor^eshim* with the *ḥor^eshe ra'ah*, 'the planners of evil,' of Prov. iii. 29.

Iniquitatem suam: the Greeks took *ma'^anotham*, 'their furrows,' as if it were *'^awonotham*, 'their iniquity.'

Jerome renders verse 3 :

Super cervicem meam arabant arantes,
prolongaverunt sulcum suum.

4. *Cervices peccatorum* : the Hebrew has, 'He sundereth the cords of the wicked.' The picture here suggested seems to represent Yahweh as cutting the ropes, or cords, by which Israel, regarded as a ploughing ox, was harnessed to the plough. In the comparison in verse 3, Israel is a soil torn by the plough-share of foreign invasion and oppression : here Israel is the wearied ox that has been ploughing for the stranger. It is possible, of course, too, that the reference is to the enemies regarded as an ox that ploughs the back of Israel, and can plough no longer when the cords of its yoke have been severed by Yahweh. The rendering *cervices* is due to the circumstance that the Hebrew *'aboth* was read by the Greeks as *gabboth*.

The Hebrew of verse 4 means that Israel's sufferings have ceased ; the Latin implies that the enemies of Israel have been punished. Augustine thinks that *cervices peccatorum=cervicati* (i.e., *superbi*) *peccatores*.

5. As the enemies of Israel have failed in the past, so the psalmist prays that they may be put to shame now and in the future.

6. The grass-seeds, or seeds of corn, that grow on the flat roofs of Oriental houses, though they sprout quickly and seem at first to promise abundance, are quickly burnt up, and wither because their soil is shallow, and they have no shelter from the sun. Before they fully develop they are destroyed ; they can never be reaped nor harvested. Hence over them can never be spoken the greeting of the passers-by to the harvesters such as we find it in Ruth ii. 4 : "And behold Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers : 'The Lord be with you.' And they answered him : 'The Lord bless thee.'" It would have been sufficient for the psalmist's immediate purpose to have said that the grass or corn on the roofs withers ere it ripens unto harvest ; but the psalmist, wishing to develop his image, goes on to say that the withered grass or corn will bring no harvest joys.

Priusquam evellatur : the Hebrew word *shalaph*, to which *evellatur* corresponds, means something like 'unsheath,' and refers, perhaps, to the process by which grass or corn that is growing 'unsheathes itself,' or bursts into ear. Though *shalaph* might, possibly, mean in certain contexts 'pull up,' as well as 'pull off' or 'unsheath,' *evellatur* is quite unsuitable as a rendering here. The original rendering of the Septuagint was πρὸ τοῦ ἐξανθῆσαι. Jerome has, *Quod statim ut viruerit arescet*. The Targum renders : 'Before it blooms, the east wind blows upon it, and it dries up.' The Syriac version has : 'Which, when a wind blows upon it, withers and dries up.'

Sinus : the fold of the garment, in which objects, like sheaves,

could be carried. Or perhaps the thought is that the binders will never gather up against their breast a bundle of such corn to tie it into a sheaf.

8. The harvesters will hear no friendly greeting, ' May the blessing of Yahweh be on your work,' nor will they answer, ' We bless you in the name of Yahweh.' What the psalmist wishes to convey in verses 6–8 is that the corn, or grass, that springs up on the house-tops withers away quickly and does not ripen to harvest ; to convey this he depicts the various familiar aspects of harvest, and then says that none of these will ever be found in the case of the ephemeral crops that grow on the house-tops. For the enemies of Sion he would wish as swift and unlooked-for extinction as comes to the sun-withered harvest-less crops of the roofs. For the comparison between the grass that quickly withers and the life of men see 4 Kings xix. 26 ; Ps. lxxxix. 6 ; cii. 15, 16 ; xxxvi. 2.

PSALM CXXIX

DE PROFUNDIS!

THIS is the sixth of the Penitential Psalms. It is the prayer of one who cries to the Lord from out of the depths of wretchedness. Whether that wretchedness is primarily the wretchedness of the nation Israel, or the misery of an individual, the psalmist is conscious that it is due to sin, and the psalm is a humble acknowledgment of guilt. The psalmist does not ask for help or vengeance against enemies, but only for forgiveness of his sins. He knows that he does not deserve pardon, but if the Lord were to remember men's sins, who could expect to escape destruction? God is no strict creditor; with Him dwells forgiveness rather than justice. Moreover, God has proclaimed Himself in His Law a God of mercy and forgiveness, and in that Law, therefore, the psalmist puts his trust. Knowing that forgiveness must, then, eventually be graciously granted, the psalmist will wait and watch eagerly for the tokens of its coming—more eagerly than the weary night-watcher looks for the dawn. Let Israel, too, wait trustingly for the pardon of its sins—for loving-kindness and plenteous redemption are with the Lord.

From 2 Chron. vi. 40 we can see that this psalm was known to the author of Chronicles: it must, therefore, have existed in the fourth century, B.C.

1. Canticum graduum.

De profundis clamavi ad te Domine:
2. Domine exaudi vocem meam:
Fiant aures tuæ intendentes, in vocem deprecationis meæ.

3. Si iniquitates observaveris Domine: Domine quis sustinebit?
4. Quia apud te propitiatio est: et propter legem tuam sustinui te Domine.
Sustinuit anima mea in verbo ejus:
5. Speravit anima mea in Domino.

1. A Gradual Psalm.

Out of the depths I cry to Thee, Lord,
2. O Lord, hearken to my voice!
Let Thine ears give heed to my plaintive cry!

3. If Thou, Lord, shouldst retain sin,
O Lord, who could stand?
4. But with Thee is Forgiveness,
And because of Thy Law I trust in Thee, Lord.
My soul trusteth in His word;
5. My soul waiteth for the Lord.

6. A custodia matutina usque ad noctem: speret Israel in Domino.
7. Quia apud Dominum misericordia: et copiosa apud eum redemptio.
8. Et ipse redimet Israel, ex omnibus iniquitatibus ejus.

6. From the morning watch until night,
Let Israel wait for the Lord:
7. For with the Lord is loving-kindness,
And plenteous redemption is with Him.
8. He will ransom Israel
From all its sin.

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1. It is not possible to regard this psalm definitely as a caravan-song, or as a pilgrimage song.

De Profundis: great depths of water are a symbol of misery: *Cf.* Ps. xxxix. 3; lxviii. 3, 15. The 'depths' are often explained as depths of moral wretchedness, or sin, rather than national or social misery. But whether the psalmist speaks as an individual, or as representing the nation Israel, it is clear that he associates the misery out of the depths of which he cries as either sin, or as due to sin; hence, it is no misapplication of the psalm to use it in the Liturgy as a cry for pardon springing from a poignant consciousness of sin.

Clamavi: the cry is still going on, so that we are not to take the perfect literally.

2. *Vocem deprecationis mea*, 'my tearful cry.'

3. *Observaveris*: if the Lord 'kept' sins—retained them, that is—and did not blot them out, who could possibly abide His anger? *Observare*, 'to keep,' is used here as an antithesis to remitting. *Cf.* John xx. 23: *Quorum retinueritis retenta sunt.*

Quis sustinebit: who should abide before the anger of God?

4. *Quia*; some such clause as, 'But God does *not* keep our sins' is implied in this *quia*. God does not keep strict account of our sins, because with Him is *hass^e^liḥah*, 'the Forgiveness,'' ὁ ἱλασμός, 'the Propitiation.' The phrases, 1 John ii. 2, 'He is the propitiation for our sins,' and 1 John iv. 10, 'He loved us and sent His Son, the propitiation for our sins,' are probably echoes of this verse.

Propter legem tuam: the Hebrew text is here quite different: with the preceding clause it runs: 'With Thee is forgiveness that thou mayest be feared.' The text which the Massoretes read *l^e^ma'an tiwware'*, the Greeks must have read (though the accepted Greek text has departed from the Greek which lies behind the Vulgate here) *l^e^ma'an tora'*, 'for the sake of the Torah ('Law').' This the Greeks read with the following clause, so that we have in the Vulgate, *Et propter legem tuam sustinui te Domine.* The 'Law' contains the divine promise of forgiveness of sin, and hence the psalmist will wait confidently for the fulfilment of that promise. *Cf.* Ps. cii. 8, 9.

Sustinuit anima mea: the Hebrew here, and in the following

clause, is phrased differently from the Latin: the Massoretic text has:

I wait for Yahweh,
  My soul waiteth:
And for His word I look eagerly.

There is nothing in the Hebrew to correspond to the *te* in *sustinuit te*, and since it is out of harmony with the *ejus* in *in verbo ejus*, it ought to be omitted. Arranging the words of the Vulgate so as to bring them as near as possible to the sense of the Hebrew we should have:

Sustinui Dominum:
  Sustinuit anima mea:
In verbo ejus speravi.
Anima mea ad Dominum
  A custodibus ad mane.
Speret Israel in Domino, etc.

Jerome renders 3*b*–5 much better than the Vulgate:

Sustinui Dominum,
  Sustinuit anima mea,
    Et verbum ejus expectavi;
  Anima mea ad Dominum.

Sustinere means 'to wait for, to look for.'

5. *Speravit anima mea in Domino*: there is nothing corresponding to *speravit* in the Hebrew, but the Hebrew phrase, 'My soul unto Yahweh,' clearly means, 'My soul waits for Yahweh,' so that *speravit* makes the sense of the passage clear; it may be based ultimately on a better form of the Hebrew text than that which the Massoretes have retained.

6. *A custodia matutina*: in the Hebrew this phrase must be read with the preceding, and then we get the sense:

My soul (hopeth) for the Lord
  More than watchers for the morning.

As the watchers, weary from their long vigil, watch with eager longing for the first tokens of the dawn, so the psalmist watches—but more eagerly—for the breaking of the dawn of God's forgiveness and redemption. *A custodia matutina* should be *plus quam custodes expectant auroram*; the *a'* is=the Hebrew *min*, the particle of comparison.

The Hebrew phrase, 'the watchers for the morn,' is repeated in the Massoretic text to indicate the eagerness of the watchers' longing (like the repetition in Ps. cxxviii. 2). The Greeks seem to have misunderstood the Hebrew construction with *min*; and the repetition of 'watchers for the morn' they transformed by conjecture into μεχρὶ νυκτός. Jerome gives here the rendering:

Anima mea ad Dominum
  A vigilia matutina usque ad vigiliam matutinam.

Speret Israel in Domino: according to the Hebrew a new sentence

begins here: 'Wait, O Israel, for Yahweh!' This is obviously better than the Vulgate arrangement, which, as has just been said, is based on a misunderstanding of the comparative use of the preposition *min* in the Hebrew. The Latin translators evidently thought that watching from the morning until night indicated great intensity of interest in the watchers: the watchers of the last night-watch would naturally betake themselves to rest in the morning. If then they continue their vigil until the following night, it can only be because they are intensely eager to see that for which they had watched until morning.

7. Israel is to put all her trust in Yahweh, because loving-kindness and plenteous redemption are with Him.

8. Hence He will at last rescue Israel from her miseries, and wipe away all her guilt.

PSALM CXXX

RESIGNATION

THIS little psalm is a protest of humility and of complete resignation to the designs of God. It is often interpreted as a communal psalm which declares that Israel has learned through much suffering that there is no rest save in the Lord. The concluding verse would support the communal interpretation. Yet the poem seems to admit more naturally of an individual interpretation. The psalmist once strove after great and lofty things with insatiable ambition: now he understands how futile all worldly ambitions are. He is now like the child that is weaned, and that rests silently on the bosom of its mother, satisfied with the mother's tender caresses. His soul is no longer clamorous and restless; it is as silent within the psalmist as is the weaned child with its mother. And as the weaned child nestles lovingly in the mother's arms with no wish but that of enjoying its mother's love, so the psalmist, putting aside all cares, abandons himself with a sense of great security and comfort to the loving-kindness of the Lord. The last verse may be a liturgical addition to the psalm.

The ascription of the psalm to David in the title is not above suspicion from the standpoint of textual criticism (it is wanting in the Septuagint) so that there is no need to take the probability of Davidic authorship seriously into account.

1. Canticum graduum David.

Domine non est exaltatum cor meum: neque elati sunt oculi mei.
Neque ambulavi in magnis: neque in mirabilibus super me.
2. Si non humiliter sentiebam: sed exaltavi animam meam:
Sicut ablactatus est super matre sua, ita retributio in anima mea.

3. Speret Israel in Domino, ex hoc nunc et usque in sæculum.

1. A Gradual Psalm of David.

O Lord, my heart is not proud;
And my eyes are not lofty:
I strive not after great things,
Nor after things too high for me.

2. Indeed, I think humbly of myself,
And exalt not my soul:
Like the weaned child (that resteth) on its mother,
Yea, like the weaned child (resteth) my soul in me!

3. Let Israel hope in the Lord,
Henceforth and for ever!

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1. *Mirabilibus super me*: 'things too wonderful for me.' *Cf.*

Eccli. iii. 22 : *Altiora te ne quaesieris, et fortiora te ne scrutatus fueris* ; Jer. xlv. 5 ; *Et tu quaeris tibi grandia.* *Cf.* with the thought here expressed Ps. c. 5 : *Superbo oculo et insatiabili corde, cum hoc non edebam.*

2. *Si non* : *Cf.* Ps. lxxxviii. 36. We have here an instance of Hebrew asseveration accompanied with an imprecation (*cf.* Ps. cxix. 3). The sense is, 'If I am not lowly in my thoughts, etc., then may the Lord do so and so to me.' The psalmist desires by this method of expression to state very emphatically that his thought of himself is humble, and that he does not exalt himself.

Exaltavi : the Greeks evidently read in their Hebrew text, *romamti* : the Massoretic text has *domamti*, 'I silenced.' The sense of the Hebrew text is that the psalmist silenced the clamours of his soul : the Latin text (when *exaltavi* is included in the imprecation formula), means that the psalmist has not lifted up his thought to great plans. The Massoretic text is better, because the chief point in the comparison with the weaned child that follows is the silence and absence of clamorous requests on the part of the child.

Sicut ablactatus . . . super matre sua : as the weaned child no longer clamours to be fed by its mother, but rests quietly on her bosom, so does the soul of the psalmist rest without longing or foolish ambition in the Lord. The literal sense of the Massoretic text is :

Like a weaned child on (or, with) its mother,
Like a weaned child is with me my soul.

The *ablactatus* represents correctly the Hebrew *gamul* ('weaned') ; in the second part of the phrase *gamul* occurs again, but the Greeks, instead of reading *gamul* a second time, read *g^e^mul* (=*retributio*) : *'alai*, 'with me' they read as *'ale*, 'with,' and made it to govern *naphshi* (my soul). In point of fact, however, *naphshi* is a nominative, so that the correct translation, using the Vulgate turns of expression, would be :

Sicut ablactatus super matre sua,
Sicut ablactatus (est) anima super me.

It is difficult to assign any very useful meaning to the *retributio* of the Vulgate. Hence the translation above has followed the Hebrew. Some commentators reading *g^e^mul*, 'reward,' 'requital' in both clauses of the Hebrew claim to get as the meaning of verse 2 :

"If I humble not,
But exalt my soul,
The honouring of one's mother
Is the honouring shown to me,"

which, paraphrased, means : 'It is true that I do not show myself humble in the honour that has been conferred upon me, but that is only because the honour has been, in truth, conferred on my mother, Israel.'

This rendering removes the imprecatory character of verse 2, and interprets the psalm as the protest of an individual, to whom honour has been shown, that the honour is really intended rather for Israel (his mother) than for him. This type of quasi-official humility is, however, without parallel in the Psalter. Some of the Greek commentators have explained the comparison with the weaned child as intended to convey the thought: 'If I have not made my soul like unto the child that, though weaned, clings close to its mother, but rather have exalted my soul, then let requital befall me.'

3. This verse is most naturally regarded as a liturgical addition. If, however, the psalm primarily refers to the nation Israel, rather than to an individual, the last verse would be perfectly in place—for to the lowly the Lord grants His favours.

PSALM CXXXI

THE DWELLING-PLACE OF YAHWEH

ACCORDING to tradition (2 Chron. vi. 41*f.*) this psalm was chanted by Solomon at the Dedication of the Temple. There is no good reason for doubting this tradition. The psalm consists of two equal parts, balanced against each other, verses 1–9 and 10–18. Each of these parts begins with a reference to David, in view of whose merits before the Lord a prayer is made on behalf of the Israel of the psalmist's time and of its king. In the first part, the psalmist deals with David's zeal for the erection of a dwelling for the Lord in Sion ; he puts himself back in spirit into the days of David's reign, and, speaking as a subject of David, he records an oath (not elsewhere chronicled) by which David bound himself to provide a due dwelling-place for Yahweh. In Bethlehem the people heard of this oath, and in Kiryath-Yearim, where the Ark was resting, they heard of it also, and the psalmist depicts the multitudes streaming to Kiryath-Yearim and praying there, at 'the foot-stool of Yahweh's feet,' that He might deign to go up to Sion, His chosen dwelling-place. In Sion He would receive due worship as the mighty God of Israel, and His presence in Jerusalem would be a source of joy for the pious ones of His people.

In the second part of the psalm the psalmist begins by praying that Yahweh may be as gracious towards His 'Anointed' (*i.e.*, Solomon) as His promise to David through Nathan (2 Kings vii. 4–16) demanded. Through Nathan the Lord had promised that the Davidic house would forever rule in Jerusalem, that He Himself would make Jerusalem His dwelling-place for all time, and that Sion, through the presence of the Lord, would be for ever a seat of peace and plenty, of splendid worship and holy gladness. He had promised, moreover, that the descendants of David who would sit on the Davidic throne would be worthy heirs of David's might—'horns' unto David, reproducing the greatness of David undimmed, and handing it on as the brightness of the never-extinguished lamp is perpetuated. Let Yahweh, then, fulfil all this great promise in Solomon and in his heirs !

The discourse of Solomon at the Dedication of the Temple (3 Kings viii. 14*ff.*) reads like a prose-version of this psalm. 2 Chron. vi actually puts portions of this psalm in the mouth of Solomon at the Dedication, and we are justified, therefore, in regarding the psalm as being as ancient as the Temple of Solomon itself. That the psalm

was used in the Temple-liturgy of the whole monarchical period is most probable. The Messianic character of the psalm is obvious: the Messianic King was to be a "Son of David," and the Messianic Kingdom was to be a re-establishment of the Kingdom of David. The Messias was to be, as the *Benedictus* has it, *cornu salutis nobis in domo David pueri sui.*

1. Canticum graduum.

Memento Domine David, et omnis mansuetudinis ejus:
2. Sicut juravit Domino, votum vovit Deo Jacob:
3. Si introiero in tabernaculum domus meæ, si ascendero in lectum strati mei:
4. Si dedero somnum oculis meis, et palpebris meis dormitationem:
5. Et requiem temporibus meis: donec inveniam locum Domino, tabernaculum Deo Jacob.

6. Ecce audivimus eam in Ephrata: invenimus eam in campis silvæ.
7. Introibimus in tabernaculum ejus: adorabimus in loco, ubi steterunt pedes ejus.
8. Surge Domine in requiem tuam, tu et arca sanctificationis tuæ.
9. Sacerdotes tui induantur justitiam: et sancti tui exsultent.

10. Propter David servum tuum, non avertas faciem Christi tui.
11. Juravit Dominus David veritatem, et non frustrabitur eam: de fructu ventris tui ponam super sedem tuam.
12. Si custodierint filii tui testamentum meum, et testimonia mea hæc, quæ docebo eos:
Et filii eorum usque in sæculum, sedebunt super sedem tuam.

13. Quoniam elegit Dominus Sion: elegit eam in habitationem sibi.
14. Hæc requies mea in sæculum sæculi: hic habitabo quoniam elegi eam.

1. A Gradual Psalm.

Be mindful, O Lord, of David,
And of all his piety,
2. How he sware to the Lord,
And vowed to the God of Jacob;
3. "I will not enter my tent of dwelling,
Nor go up to my couch;

4. I will not give sleep to my eyes,
Nor slumber to my eyelids,

5. Nor rest to my temples,
Until I have found a place for the Lord,
A dwelling for the God of Jacob."

6. Behold we heard of it in Ephratha;
We learned it in the forest-wilds.

7. We entered into His tent;
We did homage to the foot-stool of His feet;
8. "Ascend, O Lord, to Thy resting-place,
Thou and Thy holy Ark!

9. Let Thy priests put on justice,
And let Thy pious ones rejoice."

10. For the sake of David, Thy servant,
Turn not Thy Anointed away.

11. The Lord sware truth unto David,
And He will not frustrate it:
"One from the fruit of thy body
I will place on thy throne;
12. If thy sons keep my law,
And these my decrees which I teach them,
Their sons for all time,
Shall sit on thy throne."

13. For the Lord hath chosen Sion;
He hath desired it as His dwelling:

14. "This is my resting-place for ever,
Here will I dwell, because I have desired it.

15. Viduam ejus benedicens benedicam : pauperes ejus saturabo panibus.
16. Sacerdotes ejus induam salutari : et sancti ejus exsultatione exsultabunt.
17. Illuc producam cornu David, paravi lucernam Christo meo.

18. Inimicos ejus induam confusione : super ipsum autem efflorebit sanctificatio mea.

15. Its widows I will richly bless,
Its poor I will sate with bread ;

16. Its priests I will clothe with salvation,
And its pious ones shall greatly rejoice.
17. There I will cause a Horn to spring forth to David ;
There I have prepared a Light for my Anointed ;
18. His enemies I will clothe with shame ;
But over him ' my consecration ' shall gleam brightly."

1. *Mansuetudinis* : the Greeks read in their Hebrew text '*anwatho*, ' his meekness,' instead of the Massoretic '*unnotho*, ' his labour ' (the infinitive Pual used as a noun, " his being plagued "). The ' labour,' or ' trouble,' of David includes the troubles of his life generally in so far as they were incurred in the service of Yahweh. In particular, the zeal of David for the Ark, and his efforts to secure for it and for the Lord a becoming dwelling are thought of as a chief portion of that ' trouble.'

2. The historical books contain no such oath of David (*cf.* 2 Kings, vi. vii), but the poet may be drawing here on special traditional sources. From 2 Kings vi and vii we can gather that David had decided to build a dwelling for the Lord.

Deo Jacob : the Massoretic text has, ' the Strong One of Jacob,' ' the Hero of Jacob.'

3. We have here again the formula of swearing. A clause like, ' May Yahweh do so and so to me ' must be regarded as preceding the ' if.' Hence negative oaths are introduced by ' if,' and positive oaths by ' if . . . not.'

Tabernaculum domus meæ, ' the tent which is my dwelling ' : *lectum strati*=' the bed which is my couch.' *Cf.* 2 Kings vii. 2.

4. *Cf.* Prov. vi. 4.

5. *Et requiem temporibus meis* : this clause is a doublet, for it is nothing more than a rendering of Theodotion's translation of the clause, ' Nor to my eyelids slumber.' We have here, therefore, a setting together of two Greek versions of 4*b*.

By the ' place ' is meant an abiding place of residence. David will not permit the Ark to be carried around from district to district.

6. In verses 6–9 we have the words of the people of David's time who heard of his oath : the psalmist feels himself as one of them. The *eam* refers, apparently, to the oath of David, or to the report of it. The people of Ephratha would naturally hear of it, for Ephratha is probably a name for David's own town, Bethlehem. The name Ephratha means ' Fruit-land,' and would be a suitable designation for the south-land, where Bethlehem lay. In Micheas v. 2, Bethlehem

is actually called Ephratha (also in Gen. xxxv. 19 and Ruth iv. 11). The *Campi silvæ* may possibly be taken as a proper name; one naturally is reminded here of *Ḳiryath-Yearim*, 'the Town of the Forest,' where the Ark lay so long in neglect until it was transferred to Sion (*cf.* 1 Kings vii. 2). In the translation above it is implied that the people on hearing of David's oath went to visit the Ark at *Ḳiryath-Yearim*. In the Massoretic text we have, however, not *Ḳiryath-Yearim* but *Sᵉdhe-Ya'ar*, 'forest-fields,' or, 'forest-wilds.' Some commentators regard 'Forest-Fields' as a general designation of northern Palestine, and take the reference to Ephratha and the *Campi Silvæ* as implying that the report of David's oath ran through the length and breadth of the land. Jerome renders, *Invenimus illam in regione saltus*. It is reasonable, however, in view of the parallelism with Ephratha, to take *Campi silvæ* as a proper name; and since the Ark was for a long time at *Ḳiryath-Yearim*, 'the Forest-Town,' it is not far-fetched to suppose that it was at *Ḳiryath-Yearim* the prayer in verses 8–9 was uttered 'at the foot-stool of Yahweh's feet.' Instead of *mᵉṣa'nuha, invenimus eam*, it is probable that the original text had *hoṣe'nuha*, 'we published it'; they heard of David's oath in his native town, and they spread the report of it even unto Ḳiryath-Yearim.

7. The people entered the place where the Ark stood.

In loco ubi steterunt pedes ejus: the Hebrew has: 'We did homage to the foot-stool of His feet'; the translators in rendering *in loco ubi steterunt* were thinking of the Temple, or of the Ark on Sion.

8. An appeal to Yahweh to ascend to Sion to take the place prepared for Him by David. Instead of 'holy Ark' the Hebrew has, 'Thy mighty Ark.'

9. Justice is to be donned as a robe by the priests of Sion: the 'due' performance of the liturgy of worship would be an important exercise of priestly 'justice.' The *sancti* are the loyal worshippers of Yahweh who will rejoice in the presence of the Lord on Sion. With verses 8–10 *cf.* 2 Chron. vi. 41*f*.

10. This is the beginning of the second part. In view of David let not Yahweh send away, or reject, the Anointed, *i.e.*, the reigning king of Israel (Solomon). *Avertere faciem* means 'to refuse a request.' When this psalm was chanted in the liturgy of the post-Solomonic period, it is possible that the 'Anointed' was primarily understood of the Messias.

11. The oath of Yahweh is put in contrast with that of David. God has sworn truth—*i.e.*, that which He has sworn must surely be fulfilled. The oath of Yahweh is the promise through Nathan, 2 Kings vii. 26, 27. The permanence of the Davidic Dynasty is connected with the permanent residence of Yahweh on Sion.

De fructu ventris : 'one from the fruit of.'

12. *Cf.* 2 Kings vii. 12, 16.

13. Yahweh's love for Sion is given as the ground of the promise of Davidic permanence : Yahweh, having chosen Sion as His residence, will not allow it to lack an earthly king.

The second *elegit* represents the Hebrew *'iwwah*, 'desired.'

14. Note how verse 14 answers, as it were, to verse 8—just as verse 16 answers the prayer of verse 9. *Elegi eam* translates *'iwwithiha*, 'I have desired it.'

15. The dwelling of Yahweh on Sion will bring with it many external blessings for the people of Jerusalem ; the poor shall not suffer there, nor the widows be in want.

16. The 'salvation' symbolises the internal blessings which the Dwelling-place of Yahweh shall bring to those of Sion. The 'salvation' with which the priests shall be clothed will be imparted also to the people, and, therefore, they will all rejoice.

17. The Hebrew has 'I will cause a horn to spring forth there for David' : the immediate reference is, of course, to each individual King in Jerusalem as a strong son of the Davidic house, but, in the later periods at least, there would be found here a hint of the horn *par excellence* that was to be made to spring forth (the Hebrew verb *ṣamaḥ* here employed recalls the technical designation of the Messias *Ṣemaḥ*, the 'Sprout' or 'Shoot') for David. This is the 'Horn' which the Author of the *Benedictus* celebrated, *Erexit cornu salutis nobis in domo David pueri sui.* Compare Ezech. xxix. 21 : 'In that day I will cause a Horn to shoot forth (*'aṣmiaḥ*) unto the House of Israel.' For the use of the Messianic epithet *Ṣemah*, 'Shoot,' see Jer. xxiii. 5 ; xxxiii. 15 ; Zach. iii. 8). The psalm in the Hebrew text of Eccli. (li. 12 ; xv) refers also to the raising up of a Horn 'for Israel.' *Cf.* Ps. cxlviii. 13.

Lucernam : the light is here symbolic of posterity : *cf.* 2 Kings xxi. 17 ; 3 Kings xi. 36 ; xv. 4 ; 4 Kings viii. 19. 'Light' is also a symbol of prosperity and renown.

The *Christus* (the Anointed, *Mashiaḥ*) is David. Yahweh promises perpetuity of rule and fame to the House of David.

19. The enemies of the Davidic House and of Sion will be clad with shame as with a garment.

Efflorebit sanctificatio mea : the Hebrew has 'On him shall gleam brightly his crown.' The Greeks read *nizri*, 'my crown' instead of *nizro*, 'his crown', and they took *nezer* in the sense of 'consecration.' It is possible, however, that they conceived of the crown in question as being itself a symbol of holiness, some kind of head-covering, that is, which would mark off its wearer as a man of holiness. The Hebrew means that the crown of the Davidic king shall be like a bright and beautiful flower—blooming, 'as fresh and bright as starting flowers in spring' (Keble). The commentators generally understand the

Christus here to be the Messias; but the text clearly parallels the Anointed with David. The 'Horn' and the 'Light' may be regarded, in a sense, as designating the Messias—since each Davidic King was somehow a type of the Messias—but neither the 'Horn' nor the 'Light' is here identified with the Anointed or with David.

PSALM CXXXII

THE BLESSINGS OF BROTHERLY UNITY

THIS little poem is obviously inspired by the sight of such a gathering of Israelites as might be seen assembled to celebrate one of the great feasts at Jerusalem. As the psalmist gazes on the festive gathering, which so clearly emphasises the unity of Israel in spite of political divisions, he is reminded of the rite of priestly consecration, and, in particular, of the oil used in that rite, with its clinging perfume and its overflowing abundance. As the oil of consecration dedicated the priest unto the service of the Lord, so the gathering together of all the people for the feast is a sort of consecration of them all to the service of Yahweh. The scene of festive worship, with all its peacefulness and brotherly kindliness reminds the psalmist, further, of the protecting care of Yahweh which it implies: it suggests the thought of the 'Hill of Sion' as enveloped in a rich dew-mist—a 'Hermon dew'—of divine grace and favour. It is as the religious centre of the nation that Jerusalem has been made by the Lord the source of life and blessing.

This psalm was not composed for use on caravan-journeys. Yet we could well imagine it as sung by wanderers who have returned from distant lands to join in the celebration of the same great feast. And if it had been thus sung at a festive gathering in Jerusalem, it might well be used by the wanderers when they had gone forth again on a journey, to remind them of the joys and peace of home.

1. Canticum graduum.

Ecce quam bonum, et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum:
2. Sicut unguentum in capite, quod descendit in barbam, barbam Aaron.
Quod descendit in oram vestimenti ejus:
3. Sicut ros Hermon, qui descendit in montem Sion.
Quoniam illic mandavit Dominus benedictionem, et vitam usque in sæculum.

1. A Gradual Psalm.

See how good and how pleasant it is,
When brethren dwell together!

2. Like oil poured out on the head,
That runneth down to the beard,
The beard of Aaron,
That runneth down to the edge of his robe:
3. As Hermon-dew
That descendeth on Mount Sion:
For there the Lord sendeth forth blessing,
Even life for ever.

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1. *Habitare fratres in unum*: the psalmist speaks of that dwelling together in peace which characterised the gatherings of the people

for worship at the three great feasts in Jerusalem. His words apply, of course, also to friendly gatherings of good men generally. Here, however, as we see from the reference to the dew that falls on Sion, and to the going forth of blessing from Jerusalem, the immediate object of the psalmist is to celebrate the festive union of the people in Jerusalem.

2. The psalmist compares the brotherly union of the people to the oil of priestly consecration. It is not easy to understand the exact point of the comparison, but the psalmist may mean that, as the oil of consecration dedicates the priest to the service of Yahweh, so the friendly foregathering of the tribes at the sacred festivals is a sort of consecration of the whole people to the service of the Lord. It is to be noted also that for the Oriental oil is a symbol of gladness and prosperity, and that anointing with oil was a feature of festive occasions (*cf.* Ps. xliv. 8). For the oil of priestly consecration see Exod. xxx. 23–25, 30. It is called here in the Hebrew text 'good oil'—which may mean specially mixed oil, such as that described in Exod. xxx, or 'most excellent oil.' The psalmist thinks of the oil as running down from the head of the priest on to his beard. In the versions the oil is depicted, further, as trickling from the priest's beard down to the border of his garment (the 'border' in the case being the edge of the aperture through which the head of the priest passed—the neck-piece). In the Hebrew it is the beard, not the oil, which flows down to the edge of the garment. Aaron is mentioned because in Exod. xxx. where the oil of consecration is described it is spoken of as intended for the anointing of Aaron and his sons (Exod. xxx. 30).

3. *Sicut ros Hermon qui descendit in montem Sion*: the dew of Mount Hermon, the mountain that dominates Palestine, was proverbially abundant. Hence we may take *ros Hermon* here rather as 'a Hermon-dew,' than as 'the dew of Hermon.' It would be difficult to explain how the dew of Hermon could reach even unto the 'hills' (as the Massoretic text has it) of Sion. Perhaps the meaning is that, as the festive gathering of the brethren at the feasts in Jerusalem recalls to the psalmist the consecration of the Aaronite priests, so the blessed peace and harmony of the united Israelites seems to him a token of the loving-kindness and grace of Yahweh which descend, like a 'Hermon-dew,' on Sion. In an interesting article in '*Biblica*' (vol. iii. part 3, pp. 338–340) the Rev. P. Power, S.J., has advanced a number of arguments to show that there is here no reference to Sion, the Holy Hill of Yahweh, and that we ought to read in the Hebrew not *Ṣiyyon*, but *Si'on*. This Mount *Si'on* is, he thinks, the *Si'on* of Deut. iv. 48. *Si'on* is a peak in the range of hills in which Hermon is the highest elevation. In this view, then, the gathered multitude of brethren would call to the psalmist's mind the mists and dews which came down from Hermon on the lower

peaks of the range to which Mt. Hermon belongs. This view (which is practically that of Agellius) is possible: it may be questioned, however, whether it does not make verse 3 somewhat prosaic. Further, while the corruption of *Si'on* into *Ṣiyyon* is possible, it ought not to be admitted unless the text does not otherwise allow of a reasonable explanation.

So far we have taken it for granted that in verses 2 and 3 the psalmist compares the gathering of the people at the festival to the oil of priestly consecration and to the descent of Hermon-dew on *Ṣiyyon*, or *Si'on*. Another view of the Hebrew text is possible, and, perhaps, more suggestive. The Hebrew permits us to regard verses 2 and 3 as a comparison of the down-flowing oil of consecration with the descending dew of Hermon, rather than as a comparison of these two things with the peaceful unity of the festive throng. The Hebrew, that is, might be rendered thus:

Like fragrant oil on the head,
  Running down to the beard,
    The beard of Aaron,
    Which floweth down to the edge of his garment,
Is the dew of Hermon,
  Which cometh down on the hills of Sion.

In this rendering the 'dew of Hermon' might be taken by metonymy for the products of Northern Palestine, and the coming down of the dew of Hermon on Sion might then mean the bringing of rich offerings by the Jews of the North to Jerusalem. This explanation of verses 2 and 3 would compel us to regard the whole psalm as a song of rejoicing over the religious unity of North and South. Even the political divisions of the country have not succeeded in preventing the union of the whole people in worship. Jerusalem is still the centre of the land. This interpretation is borne out by the concluding words of the psalm, which declare that Yahweh has made Jersualem the fountain-head of blessing and life for the people. As the 'dew of Hermon' comes abundantly to Sion in the shape of the rich offerings brought by the Jews of the North to the Holy City, so Sion sends back to Hermon, in return, the fulness of Yahweh's blessings. *Illic* obviously='in Sion.'

PSALM CXXXIII

A SUMMONS TO THE NIGHT-WORSHIPPERS

IF 'to stand in the House of the Lord' is equivalent, as it probably is, to the customary phrase 'to stand before the Lord' (*cf.* Deut. x. 8), it means to perform liturgical functions in the Temple, and we must, then, regard the psalm as an address to those who are officially engaged in the Temple worship. Since, further, those addressed are exhorted to offer their worship in the night, we must assume that the psalm is addressed to those who are about to take part in night-service in the Temple. The speakers in verses 1 and 2 may be, either the Priests and Levites who are leaving the Temple after the evening service, or, the multitude of general worshippers who have been taking part in the evening service; or, on the other hand, we might regard the summons to worship as spoken by the night-worshippers to each other. Thus the psalm is either a farewell greeting from departing worshippers to those who are about to spend the night in the Temple, or it is a summons to prayer addressed by the latter to one another. The picture suggested by the first two verses is that of the night-worshippers standing in the inner court of the Temple with hands upraised in the attitude of prayer, and with faces directed towards the Most Holy Place. As they stand thus, a priestly voice comes from within the Temple blessing the worshippers with the blessing of Yahweh, the Creator of heaven and earth. *Cf.* the High Priest's blessing in Num. vi. 22*ff*.

Isaias xxx. 29 implies that night-service was held in the old days in the Temple. We may assume that the Vigils of the great feast-days were thus celebrated. (See the Mishna tract Sukka v. 1*ff*.; 1 Chron. ix. 33; xxiii. 30; Is. xxx. 29). It is clear that the psalm was not composed originally for the use of pilgrims or of caravan-wayfarers on the march; yet it is easy to imagine a group of travellers who have departed from the Holy City after one of the great feasts repeating for their own comfort and encouragement this song which they had heard sung to the night-watchers in the Temple.

1. Canticum graduum.

Ecce nunc benedicite Dominum, omnes servi Domini:
Qui statis in domo Domini, in atriis domus Dei nostri,
2. In noctibus extollite manus vestras in sancta, et benedicite Dominum.

1. A Gradual Psalm.

Praise ye the name of the Lord,
All ye servants of the Lord,
Ye who stand in the House of the Lord,
In the courts of the House of our God!
2. In the night raise your hands towards the Sanctuary,
And praise ye the Lord.

(A priestly blessing)

3. Benedicat te Dominus ex Sion, qui fecit cœlum et terram.

3. "May the Lord bless thee from Sion, He who made heaven and earth!"

1. *Ecce*: the Hebrew *hinneh* is used here to arouse the attention of those addressed. The *servi Domini* are the servants of the Temple, the Priests and Levites officially employed in the Temple-worship. The same Hebrew word which is here rendered *servi* appears in the Vulgate text of Ps. cxii. 1 as *pueri*. Note the similarity of the first words of this psalm with the first words of Ps. cxxxiv.

Qui statis in domo Domini: this is the same as 'standing before the Lord,' which is a quasi-technical phrase used normally in the sense of taking part in the public cult of Yahweh in the Temple.

In atriis domus Dei nostri: this is wanting in the Hebrew, but it occurs in the Massoretic text of the next following psalm, and has probably been introduced from that psalm into the text of verse 1.

2. *In noctibus*: 'in the night-time.' As stated above in the introduction to this psalm, the practice of holding night-service in the Temple on certain occasions is sufficiently established.

Extollite manus vestras in sancta: the raising of the hands was the familiar gesture of prayer. The prayer was to be directed towards the Most Holy Place (*sancta*).

3. These are obviously the words of a priest who pronounces a blessing on the night-watchers. Compare the priestly blessing in Num. vi. 24. The reference to the creative work of the Lord in the formula of blessing is intended to convey the thought that the Maker of heaven and earth cannot be without the power to grant the blessings promised in His name.

PSALM CXXXIV

THE PRAISE OF YAHWEH AS THE MIGHTY GOD OF THE COVENANT

THE people, the priests, the Levites and the Proselytes are summoned to join in praising and thanking the Lord for the many favours which He has conferred on Israel. In nature and history Yahweh has shown Himself to be the almighty Helper of His people. The impotence of the heathen divinities brings out in clearer light the omnipotence of the Lord. Let all Israel, then, join in the praise of its God !

This psalm contains numerous echoes of other psalms. It is generally agreed that it is of post-Exilic origin.

1. Alleluia.

Laudate nomen Domini, laudate servi Dominum.
2. Qui statis in domo Domini, in atriis domus Dei nostri.

3. Laudate Dominum, quia bonus Dominus : psallite nomini ejus, quoniam suave.

4. Quoniam Jacob elegit sibi Dominus, Israel in possessionem sibi.

5. Quia ego cognovi quod magnus est Dominus, et Deus noster præ omnibus diis.
6. Omnia quæcumque voluit, Dominus fecit in cœlo, et in terra, in mari, et in omnibus abyssis.
7. Educens nubes ab extremo terræ : fulgura in pluviam fecit.
Qui producit ventos de thesauris suis :

8. Qui percussit primogenita Ægypti ab homine usque ad pecus.
9. Et misit signa, et prodigia in medio tui Ægypte : in Pharaonem, et in omnes servos ejus.

1. Alleluia.

Praise ye the name of the Lord :
Praise, O ye servants, the Lord ;
Ye who stand in the House of the Lord,
In the courts of the House of our God !

3. Praise ye the Lord,
For the Lord is good.
Hymn ye to His name,
For it is sweet,
4. For the Lord hath chosen Jacob for Himself,
And Israel for His own possession.

5. I know that the Lord is great,
And that our God is above all the gods.

6. All that the Lord pleased He hath done
In heaven and on earth,
In the sea and in all the deeps ;

7. He bringeth forth the clouds from the end of the earth,
He maketh lightnings into rain ;
He bringeth forth the wind from His treasuries.

8. He smote the first-born of Egypt,
Both of man and of beast ;

9. He sent signs and wonders into thy midst, O Egypt,
Against Pharaoh and all his servants.

10. Qui percussit gentes multas : et occidit reges fortes :
11. Sehon regem Amorrhæorum, et Og regem Basan, et omnia regna Chanaan.
12. Et dedit terram eorum hæreditatem, hæreditatem Israel populo suo.
13. Domine nomen tuum in æternum : Domine memoriale tuum in generationem et generationem.
14. Quia judicabit Dominus populum suum : et in servis suis deprecabitur.

10. He smote many peoples,
And slew mighty kings,
11. Sihon the king of the Amorites,
And Og the king of Bashan ;
(He smote) all the kingdoms of Canaan
12. And gave their land as a possession,
As a possession to Israel His people.

13. O Lord, Thy name endureth for ever ;
O Lord, the memory of Thee is from age to age ;

14. For the Lord procureth justice for His people,
He suffereth Himself to be entreated for His servants.

15. Simulacra Gentium argentum, et aurum, opera manuum hominum.
16. Os habent, et non loquentur : oculos habent, et non videbunt.
17. Aures habent, et non audient : neque enim est spiritus in ore ipsorum.
18. Similes illis fiant qui faciunt ea : et omnes, qui confidunt in eis.

15. The idols of the heathens are silver and gold,
The work of men's hands ;
16. They have a mouth and speak not,
They have eyes and see not,

17. They have ears and hear not,
There is no breath in their mouth.

18. May they that fashion them become like to them,
And they, too, who trust in them.

19. Domus Israel benedicite Domino : domus Aaron benedicite Domino.
20. Domus Levi benedicite Domino : qui timetis Dominum, benedicite Domino.
21. Benedictus Dominus ex Sion, qui habitat in Jerusalem.

19. House of Israel, praise the Lord,
House of Aaron, praise the Lord,

20. House of Levi, praise the Lord,
Ye fearers of the Lord, praise the Lord.

21. Blessed be the Lord from Sion,
Who dwelleth in Jerusalem !

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1. This is one of the *Psalmi allelujatici.*

The summons to praise is the same as in Ps. cxii. 1, except that the *servi* of this psalm corresponds to the *pueri* of cxii. It has been said that the four clauses of 1 and 2 are addressed respectively to the four groups named in verses 19–20—the House of Israel (=the community generally), the House of Aaron (=the priests), the House of Levi (=the Levites), the 'Fearers of the Lord' (=the Prosleytes). Thus *Laudate Dominum* would be the address to the people generally ; *Laudate servi* would be a summons to the Priests ; *Qui statis in domo Domini* would designate the Levites, and *In atriis domus Dei Nostri* would apply to the Proselytes. On this interpretation we should supply *Laudate* before each of the two last clauses, and we should insert *Qui statis* (or something equivalent) before *in atriis domus.* The *In atriis domus Dei nostri* of Psalm cxxxiii. 1, is probably, as has been said, derived from cxxxiv. 2. *Cf.* Ps. cxv. 9.

3. *Quoniam suave*: this is probably to be referred to the 'name.' The name 'Yahweh' recalls the Covenant of Sinai. Some commentators refer *suave* to the act of praising—'For it is pleasant to praise Him': but this is less probable. *Cf.* however, Ps. cxlvi. 1: *Laudate Dominum quoniam bonus est psalmus.*

4. *Quoniam Jacob*, etc.: the choosing out of Israel is a special reason why the people should praise the Lord. The *quia* in verse 5 prefaces another reason for praising the Lord—the greatness of Yahweh.

5. The 'I' here is spoken in the name of Israel. The words here are apparently a quotation of the saying of Jethro in Exod. xviii. 11: "Now I know that Yahweh is greater than all the gods."

6. The Lord's power over nature shows Him to be greater than all the other gods. For the general thought here compare Ps. cxiii.

7. Yahweh's power over nature is here described. Here, as often elsewhere, the main features of a great storm are vividly suggested: the Lord brings up the dark storm-clouds from the 'ends of the earth' (either the horizon, or the sea), the flashing lightnings pierce through the clouds, and the rain comes in streaming torrents, while the winds, released from the divine store-houses where they have been shut up, rage forth across the world. Compare the storm-scene depicted in Ps. xvii. 9–16. Jer. x. 13 presents a close parallel with verse 7:

> "When He uttereth His voice (of thunder), there is tumult of waters in heaven, and He maketh clouds to go up from the end of the earth:
> He maketh lightnings into rain,
> He bringeth forth the wind from His store-chambers."

The same words recur in Jer. li. 16. The changing of lightning into waters refers to the streaming rains which accompany lightning-storms: it was a source of wonder to the Orientals that the rains which went with lightning could not extinguish the flames of the lightning.

For the store-chambers (*thesauri*) of the winds compare Job xxxviii. 22 where we hear of the store-chambers of snow and of hail.

8. Verses 8*ff*. show the might of Yahweh in history—in the guidance of the fates of men. With verses 8 and 9 compare Ps. lxxvii. 51, 43.

9. *In medio tui Aegypte* is regarded by some commentators as an interpolation.

11. *Cf.* Deut. xxix. 7, 8.

12. *Haereditatem*: a permanent possession.

13. The great deeds of Yahweh are His imperishable memorial. This verse is taken from Exod. iii. 15. The *nomen* and *memoriale* are the same (*cf.* Ps. ci. 13). The name 'Yahweh' is a reminder of the Covenant and of all the great things done in the name of the Covenant.

14. This verse is taken from Deut. xxxii. 36.

Deprecabitur : " He allows Himself to be moved by entreaty." In the Vulgate of Deut. xxxii. 36 we have, *Et in servis suis miserebitur*. *Cf. deprecabilis* in Ps. lxxxix. 13.

15. Here the thought of verse 5 is taken up again—that Yahweh is greater than all the gods. Verses 15–20 are an almost *verbatim* reproduction of Ps. cxiii. 12–19. See the notes on that passage.

20. Notice that the Levites are addressed as a special group. The ' fearers of Yahweh ' are here also usually understood to be the Proselytes.

21. *Ex Sion* : the song of praise is to ring forth from Sion, because it is in Sion that the people are assembled to chant the praises of the Lord.

PSALM CXXXV

A THANKSGIVING LITANY

THIS psalm is a song of thanksgiving consisting largely of quotations from other passages of Scripture—especially Psalm cxxxiv and Genesis i. The psalm, as it stands, was obviously employed for liturgical purposes. A temple-choir, or a single chanter, commemorates the mercies of Yahweh towards Israel, and, as each divine favour is recited, the people respond, in litany-fashion, with the refrain: "His goodness endureth for ever." It would appear from the narrative in 2 Chron. vii. 3, and from the recurrence of this refrain in other psalms, that the participation of the people in the Temple-liturgy frequently took the form of interpolating the words, "His goodness endureth for ever" between the verses of the songs of praise chanted by the Temple-singers. We have seen extensive use of this refrain in Psalm cxvii, and we have found it used also in Ps. cv. 1; cvi. 1. The Hebrew song of thanksgiving in Ecclesiasticus l shows the same use of the refrain which we have here in Psalm cxxxv. It is possible to suppose that the refrain was not originally a part of Psalm cxxxv, for the verses of this psalm which remain after the removal of the refrain form a self-contained poem. It is now well known that antiphonal chanting, similar to the liturgical use of litanies with us, was extensively employed in Babylonian and Sumerian liturgy, and probably in the liturgies of all the ancient peoples of the Near East.

Psalm cxxxv was called the 'Great Hallel,' and it was prescribed, according to the Talmud, for the 7th day of the feast of the Pasch.

The theme of Ps. cxxxv is practically the same as that of Ps. cxxxiv—the might and mercy of Yahweh as shown in the wonders of nature and the providential guidance of history. Here, however, the great deeds of the Lord are regarded less as tokens of His might than of His mercy, or loving-kindness.

1. Alleluia.

Confitemini Domino quoniam bonus: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.
2. Confitemini Deo deorum: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.
3. Confitemini Domino dominorum: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.

1. Alleluia.

Praise the Lord, for He is good,
For His goodness endureth for ever,

2. Praise ye the God of Gods,
For His goodness endureth for ever,

3. Praise ye the Lord of Lords,
For His goodness endureth for ever.

4. Qui facit mirabilia magna solus: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.
5. Qui fecit cœlos in intellectu: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.
6. Qui firmavit terram super aquas: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.
7. Qui fecit luminaria magna: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.
8. Solem in potestatem diei: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.
9. Lunam, et stellas in potestatem noctis: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.

4. He alone doth mighty wonders;
For His goodness endureth for ever,
5. He hath made the heavens in wisdom;
For His goodness endureth for ever,
6. He hath established the earth on the waters;
For His goodness endureth for ever,
7. He hath made the great lights,
For His goodness endureth for ever,
8. The sun as ruler of the day,
For His goodness endureth for ever,
9. The moon and the stars as rulers of night,
For His goodness endureth for ever.

10. Qui percussit Ægyptum cum primogenitis eorum: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.
11. Qui eduxit Israel de medio eorum: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.
12. In manu potenti, et brachio excelso: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.
13. Qui divisit Mare rubrum in divisiones: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.
14. Et eduxit Israel per medium ejus: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.
15. Et excussit Pharaonem, et virtutem ejus in Mari rubro: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.
16. Qui traduxit populum suum per desertum: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.

10. He hath smitten Egypt through its first born,
For His goodness endureth for ever,
11. He hath led forth Israel from their midst,
For His goodness endureth for ever,
12. With mighty hand and upraised arm,
For His goodness endureth for ever,
13. He hath divided into parts the Red Sea,
For His goodness endureth for ever,
14. And led forth Israel through the midst thereof,
For His goodness endureth for ever,
15. He hath driven Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea,
For His goodness endureth for ever,
16. He hath led His people through the desert,
For His goodness endureth for ever.

17. Qui percussit reges magnos: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.
18. Et occidit reges fortes: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.
19. Sehon regem Amorrhæorum: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.
20. Et Og regem Basan: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.
21. Et dedit terram eorum hæreditatem: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.
22. Hæreditatem Israel servo suo: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.

17. He hath smitten great kings,
For His goodness endureth for ever,
18. He hath slain mighty kings,
For His goodness endureth for ever.
19. Sihon, king of the Amorites,
For His goodness endureth for ever,
20. And Og, king of Bashan,
For His goodness endureth for ever,
21. And hath given their land as a possession,
For His goodness endureth for ever,
22. As a possession to Israel, His Servant,
For His goodness endureth for ever,

23. Quia in humilitate nostra memor fuit nostri: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.

24. Et redemit nos ab inimicis nostris: quoniam in æternam misericordiæ ejus.

25. Qui dat escam omni carni: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.

26. Confitemini Deo cœli: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.
Confitemini Domino dominorum: quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus.

23. In our lowliness He hath remembered us,
For His goodness endureth for ever,

24. And hath rescued us from our foes,
For His goodness endureth for ever,

25. He giveth food to every creature,
For His goodness endureth for ever.

26. Praise ye the God of heaven,
For His goodness endureth for ever,
Praise ye the Lord of Lords,
For His goodness endureth for ever.

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1. *Cf.* Ps. cv. 1; cvi. 1; cxvii. 1.

2–3. Taken from Deut. x. 17: "For Yahweh, your God, is a God of Gods and a Lord of Lords," *i.e.*, the greatest of all who are, or are called, 'Gods' or 'Lords'—supreme God and Lord (*cf.* 1 Tim. vi. 15). The psalmist does not, of course, imply the reality of heathen gods.

5. Verses 5–9 deal with the wonders of creation.

6. The world, in Hebrew thought, is established on the waters of the great Deep. *Cf.* Is. xlii. 15; xliv. 24; Ps. xxiii. 2.

7. Verses 7–9 are based immediately on Gen. i. 14–16. The Hebrew text here speaks of 'lights' (*'orim*) rather than of 'luminaries.'

8. *Potestas* is put here by metonymy for 'ruler,' or 'holder of power.'

9. *Et stellas*: this is regarded by some commentators as an interpolation.

10. Verses 10–22 are practically a repetition from the preceding psalm.

Cum primogenitis, 'by means of their first-born.'

11. *Eorum*, of the Egyptians.

12. *Cf.* the narrative of Exod. 12*ff.*, and Deut. iv.

13. The *divisiones* are the divided sections of the Red Sea. *Cf.* Ps. lxxvii. 13; Exod. xiv. 16, 21.

15. *Excussit*: Agellius explains: *Impetu quodam projecit, ac si emissae ex arcu sagittae ejectae essent, ut se retinere et redire non possent.* Jerome renders *convolvit*. The Hebrew verb here used means to 'drive forward.'

19. *Cf.* Ps. cxxxiv. 11. See Num. xxi. 21*ff.*

23. The *humilitas* includes not merely the troubles in Egypt, but all the afflictions of Israel in later periods.

25. 'All flesh' includes animals generally. For the thought compare Ps. ciii. 27; cxliv. 15.

26. 'God of heaven' is an epithet familiar among the Phoenicians: it is often regarded as an indication of the late date of this psalm.

27. For 'God of Gods' and 'Lord of Lords' see verses 2 and 3 above.

PSALM CXXXVI

BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON

THE author of this poem, speaking as one of those who have returned from the Babylonian Exile, depicts for us with great poetic skill and power a typical scene of the Captivity.

Suggesting with the subtle brevity of the true poet the setting of his tale, he puts before us the land of Exile with its network of poplar-bordered streams and channels, and tells us of a day when he and his comrades, gathered together according to their wont (*cf.* Acts xvi. 13) by one of the Babylonian streams for prayer, sat weeping as they thought of the glories of Sion's worship in which they had at one time shared. Their prayer-gathering by the streamside was brightened by no song or burst of sacred music, for in Babylon, amid strangers and outside Yahweh's land, the music of the Temple-songs could not be heard, and the harps that in Jerusalem might have swelled the volume of the Temple-orchestra, hung sadly silent on the poplars that lined the stream. As the Exiles prayed and wept, people of Babylon passed that way, and seeing the weeping worshippers and the silent harps, asked mockingly for one of the old glad 'songs of Sion.' 'But how,' said the Exiles, 'can we sing the songs of Yahweh on a soil that is not His?'

The strangers pass on, but the sting of their insolence rouses the psalmist and his comrades to anger. How could a true Israelite ever be disloyal to the Temple and to Yahweh? "If ever I forget thee, Jerusalem," the psalmist cries, "or make thee not the crown of my joy, may my right hand wither, and my tongue cleave to my palate!"

Then the note of passion deepens, and the psalmist cries out for vengeance against the Edomites who had joined in the work of destruction on 'Jerusalem's Day'—the day of her fall. But more bitter than against Edom is the anger of the Exiles against Babylon, the chief agent of Jerusalem's disaster and their own jailor. Taking up the burden of ancient prophecies against Babel, the Exiles forecast the doom that awaits the Destroyer of Sion: "Blessed is he who repayeth thee thy deeds against us. Blessed is he who shall seize and shall dash against the rock thy little ones!"

The Vulgate superscription of the psalm, *Psalmus David, Hieremiae*, must be regarded as meaning either, 'A psalm of Jeremias after the manner of a Davidic Psalm,' or, 'A Psalm after the manner of David and of Jeremias.' The Hebrew text contains no ascription to an author.

Psalmus David, Hieremiæ.

1. Super flumina Babylonis, illic sedimus et flevimus : cum recordaremur Sion :
2. In salicibus in medio ejus, suspendimus organa nostra.

3. Quia illic interrogaverunt nos, qui captivos duxerunt nos, verba cantionum :
Et qui abduxerunt nos : Hymnum cantate nobis de canticis Sion.
4. Quomodo cantabimus canticum Domini in terra aliena ?

5. Si oblitus fuero tui Jerusalem, oblivioni detur dextera mea.
6. Adhæreat lingua mea faucibus meis, si non meminero tui :
Si non proposuero Jerusalem, in principio lætitiæ meæ.

7. Memor esto Domine filiorum Edom, in die Jerusalem :
Qui dicunt : Exinanite, exinanite usque ad fundamentum in ea.
8. Filia Babylonis misera : beatus, qui retribuet tibi retributionem tuam, quam retribuisti nobis.
9. Beatus, qui tenebit, et allidet parvulos tuos ad petram.

A Psalm after the manner of David and of Jeremias.

1. By the rivers of Babylon
We sat, yea and wept,
When we thought of Sion.
2. On the willows therein
We hung up our harps.

3. For our captors there
Asked of us songs,
They who led us away,
" Sing us some song of Sion."

4. How could we sing a song of Yahweh,
In the land of the stranger ?

5. If I forget thee, Jerusalem,
Be my right hand forgotten ;

6. Cleave my tongue to my palate,
If I remember thee not,
If I make not Jerusalem,
The crown of my joy !

7. Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom,
On Jerusalem's day :
Who cried out : " Destroy ye, destroy
To her deepest foundation ! "

8. Wretched daughter of Babel,
Blessed is he who repayeth thee
Thy deeds against us !

9. Blessed is he who shall seize, and shall shatter
Thy babes 'gainst the rock !

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1. *Psalmus David, Hieremiae* : it is obvious that neither David nor Jeremias could have been the author of a psalm composed by a poet who had been one of the Babylonian Exiles. The title suggests that the psalm resembles both the typical Davidic psalms and the Lamentations of Jeremias. The psalmist speaks, apparently, from personal experience, so that we must date the psalm, at latest, in the beginning of the post-Exilic period.

Flumina Babylonis : Babel (Babylon) means here rather the country, Babylonia, than the capital, Babel. The 'rivers' are, probably, the canals which ran across Babylonia in all directions. In the introduction above it is suggested that, as in Acts xvi. 13, the praying-places, or meeting-places ('synagogues') of the Exiles were

by the banks of streams. This would explain the 'sitting by the rivers.' The Exiles wept when they thought of the vanished glories of Jerusalem, and of the ruined worship of the Temple. *Cf.* Ps. xli. 42.

2. *In salicibus* : the Hebrew *'arabh* means rather the Euphrates-poplar than the willow. The harps (or zithers) were hung up because it was not meet that their music should be heard in Exile. As Eccli. says (xxii. 6) :

> As music in time of mourning, so is unseasonable talk.

The harps hung silent, first, because of the insolent mockery and arrogance of the strangers, and secondly, because the songs of Yahweh might not be sung on a foreign soil.

3. *Interrogaverunt* ; 'they demanded.'

Verba cantionum, 'songs.'

Qui abduxerunt nos : this rendering seems to be based largely on a conjecture of the Greek translators. The Hebrew *tolalenu* is obscure, and has been variously emended. Possibly we should read *sholᵉlenu,* 'our plunderers.'

Hymnum : the Hebrew *simḥah*=('joy,' or 'gladness'—*i.e.*, song of gladness) must be regarded as an object to *shᵉ'elenu* ('demanded of us'), and as parallel with *dibhre shir* (*verba cantionum*). Thus the words spoken by the 'plunderers' (*qui abduxerunt nos*) are : *Cantate nobis de canticis Sion,* 'Sing us some of the Sion-songs.' Jerome has not caught the sense quite accurately, as we see from his version :

> *Quoniam ibi interrogaverunt nos qui captivos duxerunt nos verba carminis,*
> *Et qui adfligebant nos laeti,*
> *Canite nobis de canticis Sion.*

A 'Song of Sion' means, probably, a song such as was wont to be sung on Sion. In the answer of the Exiles the 'song of Sion' is taken as='Song of Yahweh,' *i.e.*, a song in praise of Yahweh. In this sense 'Song of Sion' would be practically equivalent to 'Psalm' (*cf.* 1 Chron. xxv. 7*ff.*). As a parallel to the demand of the Babylonians, commentators usually point to the story of Samson playing before the Philistines (Jud. xvi. 25).

To sing the 'songs of Yahweh' for the mocking Babylonians would be to cast pearls before swine and holy things before the dogs. Hence the harps remained silent. But further, how could songs of Yahweh be sung on a foreign soil? This difficulty the heathens would understand, for it was a view widely accepted among Orientals that a deity could be duly worshipped only in his own city or land. *Cf.* 1 Kings xxvi. 19*ff.* ; 4 Kings v. 17.

5. The mocking of the Babylonians serves only to intensify the Exiles' love of home and of homeland-worship. To yield to the

request of the strangers would be to desecrate sacred music and song, and to be disloyal to Yahweh and His worship. Hence the psalmist prays that, if he should ever be so faithless towards his traditions as to make concessions to the heathens, his right hand may forget its skill in music, and his tongue cleave, as if paralysed, to his palate.

Oblivioni detur: the Greek translators read here in their Hebrew text, *tishshakhaḥ*: the Massoretic text has *tishkaḥ* ('may it forget') —to which we might supply as object 'its cunning,' or 'its skill with the harp.' It has been proposed to read *tikhḥash*, 'may it wither'— but the emendation is not necessary.

6. The psalmist and his comrades will make no concession to foreign thought or custom; their whole heart will be fixed on Sion and Yahweh.

In principio laetitiae meae. The Hebrew has, 'on the head of my joy,' *i.e.*, the crown of my joy, my chief joy, or, my chief source of joy.

7. Edom may be mentioned because the Edomites at the time this psalm was written were again showing their traditional hostility to Israel. For Edomite antagonism to the sons of Israel see Ezech. xxxv. 5, 10–12, 15; for their share in the destruction of Jerusalem see Abdias 10–16: for a vivid prophecy of Edom's overthrow see Jer. xlix. 7–22; *cf.* Lamentations iv. 21.

The 'day of Jerusalem' means the day of its overthrow; the Edomites, though kinsmen of Israel, had shown an unnatural hostility in the evil days which preceded and followed the fall of the Holy City. With the 'day of Jerusalem' compare the 'woeful day' of Jer. xvii. 16.

Exinanite, exinanite: Evertite, evertite, as Van Sante renders, would more exactly reproduce the sense. The repetition of the cry suggests the intensity of Edomite hatred.

Usque ad fundamentum in ea: '(Destroy) even its very foundation.' *Cf.* Lam. iv. 21, 22.

In this prayer of vengeance against Edom the psalmist regards the Edomites rather as enemies of Yahweh and of the worship of Yahweh, than as the political rivals of the Jewish people. Thus his anger against both Edom and Babel is largely due to his loyalty to Yahweh and to his zeal for the worship of the Lord.

9. *Filia Babylonis*: the dwellers of Babel.

Misera: the Hebrew word here used might be rendered *vastanda*, 'Thou that art doomed to destruction'; it has been proposed, however, to emend the Massoretic *hashshᵉdhudhah* (*vastanda*) into *hashshadhodhah*, 'Thou Destroyer.'

Retribuet . . . retributionem quam retribuisti: the sense is, 'pay thee back to the full that which thou hast wrought against us.'

9. This terrible doom is foreshadowed for Babel by Isaias also (xiii. 16):

> Their little ones shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes;
> Their houses shall be plundered and their wives ravished;
> I shall stir up against them the Medes from the end of heaven,
> Who heed not silver, and in gold take no pleasure,
> Who have no pity for the fruit of the womb,
> And look not with compassion on children.

For a similar doom pronounced against Nineveh see Nahum iii. 10. *Cf.* Os. x. 14; 4 Kings viii. 12. The destruction of the males of a conquered people was a comparatively familiar feature of ancient warfare. The psalmist looks forward to a complete overthrow of Babel at the hands of a greater power. The overthrow had in fact taken place before this psalm was written. The psalmist represents himself and his fellow-Exiles as praying during the Exile that the doom already spoken by prophecy against Babel might be fully accomplished. The presence of the prophetic element diminishes the difficulty which an imprecation so bitter as this against Babel in the mouth of the Psalmist might raise: we must, nevertheless, admit that the standpoint of the Hebrew poet is very different from that of the Sermon on the Mount. See Introd. p. 64. It has been customary since Augustine's time to explain the 'rock' mystically as Christ, and the 'little ones' as the passions of man's heart which ought to be taken and shattered against the 'Rock.'

PSALM CXXXVII

A HYMN OF DELIVERANCE

THIS is a song of thanksgiving for the goodness of Yahweh towards His people in general, and in particular for some gracious intervention of the Lord on behalf of Israel that has just occurred.

Yahweh has glorified His name and His word by granting success to His people, Israel. For this public thanksgiving is due. The heathen gods will be compelled to look on while thanksgiving is being made to Yahweh for the gracious deeds by which He has broken the power of Israel's heathen foes. Even the kings of the heathens, themselves, when they realise all the greatness of Yahweh's truth and kindness and power will join with Israel in honouring Him and giving Him thanks. The help which the Lord has recently given will not be refused again in time of need, for the loving-kindness of Yahweh endures for ever, and He cannot forget the 'work of His hands.'

The psalm is ascribed to David in the Massoretic text, and to David, Aggaeus and Zachary by the Septuagint. This shows uncertainty of tradition as to authorship. The idea that foreign kings are to join in honouring the God of Israel belongs to the realm of Messianic hope. It has been suggested that the best setting for this psalm would be the period of Nehemias when Israel was able to face the heathen world boldly, in the proud consciousness of her newly established power.

It will be noted that this psalm is closely allied in many respects with Ps. cxvii.

1. Ipsi David.

Confitebor tibi Domine in toto corde meo : quoniam audisti verba oris mei.
In conspectu Angelorum psallam tibi :
2. Adorabo ad templum sanctum tuum, et confitebor nomini tuo.
Super misericordia tua, et veritate tua : quoniam magnificasti super omne, nomen sanctum tuum.

3. In quacumque die invocavero te, exaudi me : multiplicabis in anima mea virtutem.

1. By David.

I thank Thee, Lord, with my whole heart,
For Thou hast heard the words of my mouth ;
Before the 'gods' I will praise Thee.

2. I will worship towards Thy sacred Temple,
I will thank Thy name,
Because of Thy goodness and truth ;
For great above all things,
Hast Thou made Thy holy name.

3. When I call unto Thee, Thou hearest me,
And increasest strength in my soul.

4. Confiteantur tibi Domine omnes reges terræ : quia audierunt omnia verba oris tui :
5. Et cantent in viis Domini : quoniam magna est gloria Domini.
6. Quoniam excelsus Dominus, et humilia respicit : et alta a longe cognoscit.

4. Let all kings of the earth thank Thee,
When they hear all the words of Thy mouth ;
5. And let them sing of the ways of the Lord ;
For great is the glory of the Lord.
6. For exalted is the Lord ;
Yet He looketh on the lowly ;
But the proud He regardeth from afar.

7. Si ambulavero in medio tribulationis, vivificabis me : et super iram inimicorum meorum extendisti manum tuam, et salvum me fecit dextera tua.
8. Dominus retribuet pro me : Domine misericordia tua in sæculum : opera manuum tuarum ne despicias.

7. When I walk in the midst of sorrow,
Thou sustainest my life,
And against the anger of my foes
Thou stretchest forth Thy hand,
And Thy right hand guardeth me.
8. The Lord maketh requital for me :
O Lord, Thy loving kindness is for ever ;
Thou wilt not despise the work of Thy hands.

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1. *Ipsi David* : in the Septuagint we find as superscription of this psalm *ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαυὶδ, καὶ Ζαχαρίου,* with which should be compared the superscription in Ps. cxi. The Greek tradition is thus uncertain about the Davidic origin of the psalm. Its strongly universalistic tone has led most modern non-Catholic commentators to ascribe Ps. cxxxvii to the post-Exilic period.

Quoniam audisti verba oris mei : this phrase is not in the Hebrew : it is wanting also in some MSS. of the Septuagint. Jerome omits it in his version.

In conspectu angelorum : the Hebrew text has, ' Before the gods '—referring apparently to the gods of the heathens, whose worshippers Yahweh has defeated. The ' angels ' of the Vulgate are taken by some commentators to be the Cherubim of the Ark. This interpretation is exceedingly unlikely. The substitution of ' angels ' for ' gods ' in the Greek version is, as we have seen, comparatively frequent : *cf.* Ps. viii. 6 ; xcvi. 7. The heathen gods will be compelled to witness the honour which is given to Yahweh.

3. *Ad templum sanctum tuum* : the prescribed attitude in prayer.

Super omne : above all things ; the construction is not *super omne nomen.*

Nomen sanctum tuum : the Hebrew has, ' Thy name, Thy word ' ; this is awkward and it has been proposed to take ' Thy word ' as an interpolation in the Hebrew, due to a copyist's error in repeating *'ᵃmittekha* (' Thy truth ') of the preceding verse as *'imrathekha* (' Thy word ') here. It might also, perhaps, be conjectured that the original text of the Septuagint had *τὸ λόγιόν σου,* instead of *τὸ ἅγιόν σου.* Perhaps, however, the best conjecture is to omit ' Thy name,' and explain the sense as, ' Thou hast done greater things than those which Thou hadst promised.'

Shim'kha ('Thy name') could be accounted for as due to a copyist's error in repeating 'Thy name' from the first half of the verse. St. Jerome thought that the *sanctum* here=Our Lord, and that the 'word' of the Hebrew text is the Logos. This view leaves the meaning of *nomen* in the context quite obscure.

3. *In quacumque die*: 'whenever.' 'Whenever I call unto Thee Thou hearkenest to me, and fillest me with the proud consciousness of strength.' The Hebrew corresponding to *multiplicabis in anima virtutem* means literally, 'Thou makest me proud in my consciousness of strength.'

4. *Omnes reges*: the foreign kings will praise Yahweh for Israel's deliverance and success. The *verba oris tui* are Yahweh's promises to Israel. The knowledge that all the promises of the God of Israel have been fulfilled will lead the heathen rulers to put their trust in Him also. *Cf.* Ps. lxxi. 11 where the worship of heathen rulers appears also as a feature of the Messianic age.

5. *In viis*: in Hebrew the verb *shir* (to sing) takes the dative: *cantare in viis* ought to be *cantare vias*. The *viae* are the dealings of Yahweh with Israel.

6. The *viae* of the Lord might be learned from His character. He is raised above all petty human things, and does not judge by human standards. The 'lowly things' which He regards are the Israelites and their affairs; the *alta* which He will not look on with interest, but merely gazes at from afar, are here the proud foes of Israel. Knowing the *alta*—the enemies of His people, from afar, He knows their plans against His people in time to frustrate them. The text, *Humilia respicit, et alta a longe cognoscit*, bears, of course, a much wider application than any reference to the affairs of Israel merely. It is a law of Yahweh's dealings with the world generally. *Cf.* Ps. cxii. 5, 6.

7. The gracious help which the Lord has given to Israel in the past will be continued in the future.

Vivificabis: 'keep alive,' not 'bring to life.'

8. *Retribuet*: Hebrew, *yighmor*; '(Yahweh) will bring it to completion,' *i.e.*, He will complete the work of rescue that He has begun. The Latin suggests the idea of making requital to the enemies of Israel for their hostility.

In His loving-kindness the Lord will be ever gracious to His people. He will not forget the 'work of His hands'—that is, Israel, which He has raised up and chosen for Himself. It is likely that we should read in the Hebrew the singular 'work' (*opus*), *ma'aseh* rather than *ma'ase* (*opera*).

PSALM CXXXVIII

THE OMNIPOTENCE AND OMNISCIENCE OF GOD

THIS psalm is a meditation on the wonderful ways of Divine Providence. The psalmist dwells particularly on the omniscience and omnipresence of God. No thought of man's heart is hidden from God, and there is no place in creation where a man can hide himself from the face of God. A man's thoughts are known before they are uttered: the creature contains no riddle for its Creator. The thought of God's knowledge leaves men helpless: no human mind can comprehend its reach. And just as no thought can be hidden from the Creator, so there is no place in the world—however unknown and remote, were it accessible only to the dawn-bird—where a mortal can pass beyond the grasp of God's hand. In heaven above, in Sheol below, God is equally present. Were a man to enwrap himself in the darkness of night to hide him from his Maker, he would find that for God the very darkness is light (verses 1–12).

And all this is but natural, for God has fashioned the whole being of man and defined for him his goal. God had looked on him while he was still in embryo; and before the dawn of even one of his days God had determined his whole career (13–16).

While God then knows utterly man's being and planning, how little man can learn of God's secrets, and how imperfectly he understands God's rule! Far too great and too high for the psalmist are the thoughts of God: if he would reckon the sum thereof, he would find them to be more numerous than the sands on the seashore. Were he to spend a whole night in reflecting thereon, he would be still occupied therewith at his waking in the morning (17–18).

One of the chief problems of God's ways for the psalmist is this: Why does God suffer to live those who flout Him? Why does He not destroy His foes? The psalmist declares that he, at all events, whether he understands God's ways or not, will hold himself aloof from the godless. Yet he begs of the Lord to search his heart, so as to discover whether he speaks the truth, and to guide him further on the right path (19–24).

In some MSS. of the Septuagint this psalm has the superscription τῷ Δαυὶδ ψαλμὸς Ζαχαρίου ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ so that we may regard the tradition as to authorship uncertain. The poem is closely allied to the book of Job in content and style. Its chief problem, as has just been said, is the same as that of Job—'Why do the wicked

prosper and the good suffer ? ' The book of Job takes this problem as ultimately insoluble, and recommends men to avoid reflection thereon, and to submit humbly and without question to the guidance of God. The psalmist is satisfied that he cannot solve the problem, but he determines to hate God's enemies, however God Himself may, in His unsearchable wisdom, deal with them. Verses 13–16 stand in the closest relation to Job x. 9–11—but not so as to depend on it immediately. The personification of the dawn in verse 9 can be paralleled in Job iii. 9 and xlii. 10. The peculiar thought of pre-existent days (verse 16) we find also in Job iii. There are several other points of contact with Job in this psalm—both linguistic and literary, but the two documents differ so much in their treatment of the problem of Providence that there can be no question of the dependence of either on the other. If we were to take linguistic phenomena as a criterion for determining the date of the psalm, we should have to assign it to a comparatively late period, for it is full of Aramaisms.

The psalmist's vivid consciousness of the ineluctable presence of God, as expressed in this poem, might be compared, to a certain extent to the sense of relentless, though loving, pursuit on the part of God which is expressed in the 'Hound of Heaven.' The attitude of the Hebrew poet, however, is not that of one who would wish to escape from the sight and grasp of the Lord : the psalmist is occupied chiefly with the thought of all that is wondrous and mysterious in the limitless knowledge and power of God : he is overwhelmed before the 'depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God' : were he to brood indefinitely thereon he would find himself but at the commencement of his meditation. While he knows so little of God's ways and being generally, he is particularly helpless before the problem of God's forbearance towards the wicked. For the godless the psalmist feels not the least interest or sympathy : they are the enemies of God, and, therefore, they are his enemies, and he prays for their destruction. Thus the Hebrew poet, intimately conscious though he is of God's knowledge of, and care for, the individual, is not concerned, like the 'Hound of Heaven' with the experiences of the soul that feels the nearness of the Lord and would fly from the task that its closely observing Master puts upon it : the theme of the psalmist is much more general and abstract.

1. In finem, Psalmus David.

Domine probasti me, et cognovisti me :
2. Tu cognovisti sessionem meam, et resurrectionem meam.

3. Intellexisti cogitationes meas de longe : semitam meam, et funiculum meum investigasti.

1. For the choir-master : a Psalm of David.

O Lord, Thou searchest me and knowest me ;
2. Thou knowest whether I sit or stand ;
Thou understandest my thoughts from afar.
3. My road and my 'resting-place' Thou provest,

4. Et omnes vias meas prævidisti: quia non est sermo in lingua mea.
5. Ecce Domine tu cognovisti omnia novissima, et antiqua: tu formasti me, et posuisti super me manum tuam.
6. Mirabilis facta est scientia tua ex me: confortata est, et non potero ad eam.

4. All my ways Thou foreknowest;
No word cometh to my tongue (unnoticed).
5. Behold, O Lord, Thou knowest all things,
The new and the old;
Thou hast fashioned me,
And hast laid Thy hand upon me.
6. Thy knowledge is too wonderful for me:
It is too lofty—I cannot reach thereto.

7. Quo ibo a spiritu tuo? et quo a facie tua fugiam?
8. Si ascendero in cœlum, tu illic es: si descendero in infernum, ades.
9. Si sumpsero pennas meas diluculo, et habitavero in extremis maris:
10. Etenim illuc manus tua deducet me: et tenebit me dextera tua.
11. Et dixi: Forsitan tenebræ conculcabunt me: et nox illuminatio mea in deliciis meis.
12. Quia tenebræ non obscurabuntur a te, et nox sicut dies illuminabitur: sicut tenebræ ejus, ita et lumen ejus.

7. Whither shall I go from Thy spirit?
Whither shall I fly from Thy face?
8. If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there!
If I go down to Sheol, Thou art there!
9. Were I to take the wings of the dawn,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
10. Even there Thy right hand would lead me,
And Thy right hand would grasp me.
11. Were I to say: "Perchance darkness would hide me;
Let the night be the sole light around me!"
12. But the darkness is not dark before Thee,
The night is bright (for Thee) like the day;
Its darkness (to Thee) is but light.

13 Quia tu possedisti renes meos: suscepisti me de utero matris meæ.
14. Confitebor tibi quia terribiliter magnificatus es: mirabilia opera tua, et anima mea cognoscit nimis.
15. Non est occultatum os meum a te, quod fecisti in occulto: et substantia mea in inferioribus terræ.
16. Imperfectum meum viderunt oculi tui, et in libro tuo omnes scribentur: dies formabuntur, et nemo in eis.
17. Mihi autem nimis honorificati sunt amici tui Deus: nimis confortatus est principatus eorum.
18. Dinumerabo eos, et super arenam multiplicabuntur: exsurrexi, et adhuc sum tecum.

13. My reins are in Thy power:
From the womb of my mother Thou hast protected me.
14. I praise Thee for Thou art mightily great,
Wonderful are Thy works;
My soul knoweth it indeed!
15. My bones were not hidden from Thee,
Which Thou formed'st in secret,
Nor my being
(Which Thou fashioned'st) in the depths of the earth.
16 While I was yet unformed Thine eyes saw me,
And in Thy book all are inscribed,—
Days are fashioned while yet not one of them is.
17. But to me, O God, too difficult are Thy thoughts:
The sum thereof is too mighty for me;
18. Would I reckon them—
More in number are they than the sand of the sea:
Were I to waken I should still be with Thee!

19. Si occideris Deus peccatores: viri sanguinum declinate a me:

19. If Thou, O Lord, would'st only slay sinners!
Begone from me, ye blood-stained ones!

20. Quia dicitis in cogitatione: accipient in vanitate civitates tuas.
21. Nonne qui oderunt te Domine, oderam? et super inimicos tuos tabescebam?
22. Perfecto odio oderam illos: et inimici facti sunt mihi.
23. Proba me Deus et scito cor meum: interroga me, et cognosce semitas meas.
24. Et vide, si via iniquitatis in me est: et deduc me in via æterna.

20. Ye who devise (against me) treachery!
And take Thy name in vain.
21. Shall I not hate those that hate Thee, O Lord?
Shall I not be weary of Thy enemies?
22. With full hatred I hate them;
To me they are deadly foes.
23. Test me, O Lord, and know my heart:
Try me and know my paths,
24. And see if there be a way of sin in me;
And lead me on an eternal way!

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1. *In finem, Psalmus David*: we return here to the familiar superscriptions of the psalms of Book I. In the introduction to the psalm above we have indicated the uncertainty of tradition as to its author.

Probasti me et cognovisti me: it is a feature of Hebrew poetry to substitute concrete facts or individual experiences for general statements. Instead of saying here that God knows the lives and thoughts of men the psalmist says that God knows his own life and thought. *Cf.* Eccli. xlii. 18–21 for another striking statement of God's omniscience *Cf.* Eccli. xvii. 19–20.

2. *Tu*: the 'Thou' is emphatic—Thou alone. *Resurrectio*= 'rising up.' 'Sitting and rising'=the whole life of the psalmist.

De longe, from afar off.

3. *Funiculum*: the Massoretic text has *ribh'i*, 'my lying down,' the Greek ἡ σχοῖνος can mean a woven mat, or couch—which would represent *ribh'i* sufficiently well. Σχοῖνος primarily means a rush, and thus it has come to mean things woven of rushes, such as cords or beds. *Funiculum* is explained here by Bellarmine and others as 'end' or 'limit' (the end of a way or path being then a resting-place, so that *funiculum* in this sense would also fairly well reproduce the Hebrew). The commonest explanation of *funiculum* here is 'way'—but there is really no basis for such an explanation. As the psalmist has spoken of his 'sitting down and rising up' in verse 2, so now he speaks of his 'moving on (this better reproduces the Hebrew than *semita*) and resting.'

Investigasti: the Hebrew verb *zeritha* means, 'Thou hast winnowed,' or, 'Thou hast put through a sieve.' Jerome has *eventilasti*: Yahweh removes, as it were, all the husks and scales which might in any way conceal the thoughts of the psalmist.

4. *Prævidisti*: the Hebrew does not suggest the thought of foreknowledge here, but rather that of intimate knowledge. Yahweh is intimately familiar with all the thoughts, words and actions of the psalmist.

Quia non est sermo in lingua mea: we must complete this phrase

in the Latin: 'There is no word on my tongue which Thou knowest not'; or 'No word cometh to my tongue unnoticed by Thee.' The Hebrew is much clearer; it reads verses 4 and 5 together, so that we ought to have here in the Latin: *Non est sermo in lingua, et ecce tu cognovisti eum totum.* Even before the psalmist speaks Yahweh knows what he would say: the Lord knows every word—even before it comes to the lips, in its full content and motives.

5. As we have phrased the Latin, the saying about the *sermo,* which is known before it is uttered, ends at *omnia*; *novissima et antiqua* should, therefore, be read with the following. Instead, however, of the Massoretic verb in the clause which follows, *ṣartani,* 'Thou straitenest me,' the Greek translators read *yᵉṣartani,* 'Thou hast fashioned me.' The context seems to demand rather the idea of close watching than of creation, for we have a reference to creation below (verses 14*f.*). Following the Massoretic text, then, we should have here: *Retro et ante* (=*novissima et antiqua*) *conclusisti me.* With this the following clause, *Et posuisti super me manum tuam,* fits in well. Setting the hand upon a person can mean guarding him closely as a prisoner. Yahweh holds men encompassed on every side, so that they cannot withdraw themselves or hide. *Cf.* Job xiii. 21:

> *Manum tuam longe fac a me,*
> *et formido tua non me terreat.*

Cf. also Job xiii. 27:

> *Posuisti in nervo pedem meum,*
> *et observasti omnes semitas meas,*
> *et vestigia pedum meorum considerasti.*

Job here describes the irksomeness of the close observation of Yahweh. The psalm is concerned with the same thing, but in a different way. Verses 4 and 5 express the thought that man can escape neither from God's eye nor from His hand.

6. *Ex me* ought to be *a me* (according to the customary usage of the Vulgate): the knowledge of God's ways is beyond the powers of the psalmist: it fills him with amazement and with a deep sense of helplessness.

Scientia tua: the Hebrew has 'knowledge,' simply.

Non potero ad eam: 'I am not equal to it.'

7. Verses 7–12 deal with the omnipresence of Yahweh.

A spiritu tuo: the 'spirit' here is the presence of God in the world as shown by action. God's face is His glance: men cannot escape from God's presence though, guilt-laden, they might wish to do so.

8. *Ascendero*: the verb in the Massoretic text is here quite Aramaic.

Descendero: The Hebrew means, 'If I should make Sheol my bed.' The heaven and Sheol are the highest and lowest points of creation: in neither is the psalmist beyond the reach of God.

9. *Diluculo*: the Hebrew means: If I should take the wings of the dawn and alight on the uttermost sea. The dawn is thought of as a bird which rises up from the Deep in the East and speeds, with great outstretched wings, across the skies to the uttermost sea in the West. Not even if the psalmist were to fly to the uttermost west with the wings of the dawn-bird might he hope to elude the presence of the Lord. The dawn rises swiftly in the Orient, and the swiftness with which the light of morning spreads must have suggested the imagery of a soaring bird. As the psalmist could not hide from the Lord in the heights or depths of the world, so neither can he escape from Him in the extremest East or West.

10. Even in the extreme West God would lead the psalmist wherever He pleased. *Etenim* is to be taken as an intensive particle here. The 'leading' here is not the gentle guidance of Providence; the sense is rather that even in the extreme limits of the world God's grasp would still be firm on the fleeing psalmist.

11. *Et dixi*: the sense here is conditional, 'If I should say: Let the darkness cover me,' etc.

Conculcabunt: we have here the same verb in the Hebrew that occurs in Gen. iii. 15, and its meaning is obscure here also (*cf.* Ps. lv. 3). Jerome renders, *Forte tenebrae operient me*: the meaning 'cover' suits the context well, but it cannot be attached with certainty to the Hebrew verb *shuph*. Hence some commentators maintain that the Hebrew text was corrupt here prior to the date of the Septuagint version, and that we should read some form like *y^e^sukkeni* ('Let it cover me') instead of the Massoretic *y^e^shupheni*.

Et nox illuminatio mea in deliciis meis: the Hebrew here is clear: 'Let the light which is round me be night': it is a repetition of the thought in the first part of the verse. Jerome's rendering, *Nox quoque lux erit circa me*, shows that he understood the Hebrew in the obvious sense intended by the Massoretes. How are we to explain the origin of the Vulgate 'my light' and *in deliciis meis*? 'My light' seems to be intended to make the sense clearer. It is not represented in the Septuagint. *In deliciis meis* is due to the mistake of reading *b^e^'edhni*, 'in my pleasures,' instead of the Massoretic *ba'^a^dheni*, 'around me.'

12. Even if the psalmist were enveloped in black night he would not, for that reason, be hidden from God's sight: darkness is never too dark for God, *i.e.*, it is never impenetrable to His eyes. For God the night is as bright as the day. *Cf.* Eccli. xxiii. 18–20.

Sicut tenebræ ejus, ita et lumen ejus: for Yahweh light and darkness are alike. The *ejus* is here due to a misunderstanding of the Hebrew nominal ending. The words, 'Darkness is like light,' may possibly be a gloss on the preceding clause.

13. *Possedisti*: the Hebrew is *ḳanitha* which would be better rendered here, *parasti*, or *formasti*: Yahweh sees us through and

through because He has formed us. The Creator must know His creatures. The reins were regarded as the seat of the innermost feelings and desires.

Suscepisti: the Hebrew means, 'Thou hast woven me together,' and the reference is to the wonderful process of formation in the mother's womb. The Greek translators read *tiss^e^bheni* (or, perhaps, *tism^e^kheni*) instead of the Massoretic *tesukkeni*. *Cf.* Job x. 11 for a description of the 'weaving' in question:

> "With skin and with flesh Thou didst clothe me,—
> With bones and with sinews didst enclose me."

14. A burst of thanks for the wondrous formation in the womb interrupts the description. The psalmist's wonder at the mystery of birth is combined with fear of the God who has made that mystery possible.

Quia terribiliter magnificatus es: the Massoretic text has here the first person, 'I was wonderfully fashioned,' but the Greek, which implies the second person (*niphletha*), is better. The works of God are wonderful, and the psalmist knows this full well.

15. *Os meum*: 'the structure, the bones.' *In occulto*=in the mother's womb.

Substantia: the Hebrew has here a verb, *rukkamti*, 'I was made (or woven).' *Substantia* in the Latin is obviously parallel to *os*. The Hebrew *rukkamti* may have been read by the Greeks *w^e^ḳomathi*, 'and my stature (or substance).'

Inferiora terræ: this must be taken as parallel to *occultum*, and must, therefore, be explained as the mother's womb. The place where the psalmist's being began was as dark as the netherworld: the darkness amid which a man's life begins is like that in which it ends. There is no reference here to a sort of divine laboratory, or 'factory' in the depths of the earth. Nor is there, as some recent writers fancy, a suggestion here of the idea of 'Mother Earth': the 'hidden place' of the first half of the verse is paralleled by the 'depths of the earth' as another hidden place, and the reference in both is to the mother's womb as the dark place of origin of men.

16. *Imperfectum*: the Hebrew *golem* means the unformed mass of the fœtus. While the psalmist's being was still embryonic the Lord beheld it. *Cf.* Eccli. xxiii. 20.

Et in libro . . . nemo in eis: the general sense of this passage seems to be: *Dies formantur, et in libro tuo omnes scribuntur, etsi nullus adhuc existat eorum.* While the fœtus was still imperfect in the womb the *dies* which the psalmist should live were determined and registered in God's book. The same thought is suggested in Job iii. 6, where Job wishes that his 'Day,' *i.e.*, the day set apart for his birth, might be expunged from the calendar. When, then, God fashions a man in the womb He forms also the days that that man shall live—even though not one of those days yet is.

17. The Hebrew text contains no reference here to 'friends': the Greeks took *re'ekha* as if it were from *rea'*, a friend, or neighbour; it is really from the same substantive which is rendered *cogitationes* in verse 2 above. The Hebrew text speaks not of honouring friends, but of the difficulty of understanding God's thoughts: 'How difficult for me are Thy thoughts.' Jerome renders, after the inaccurate manner of the old Psalteries, *Mihi autem quam honorabiles facti sunt amici tui Deus.* We need a rendering like that of van Sante:

Mihi autem, quam graves sensus tui, Deus.

The second part of the verse bears out this rendering—"How mighty is the sum thereof?" *Principatus* represents *ro'sh*, 'head,' 'sum,' etc. Jerome rendering *Quam fortes pauperes eorum*, seems to have read in his Hebrew codex the word *rash*, 'poor' instead of the Massoretic *ro'sh*.

18. *Dinumerabo eos*: the *eos*=the thoughts of God. If the psalmist tried to sum up all the thoughts of God, he would find that they were more difficult to reckon than the sands on the sea-shore.

Exsurrexi et adhuc sum tecum: the psalmist thinks of himself as falling asleep through weariness while trying to reckon up the thoughts of God, and as finding himself still fully occupied with his task when he awakes. He cannot make real progress in the work of endeavouring to realise something of the plans and the greatness of God. *Cf.* for the sleeping and waking Jer. xxxi. 26. *Exsurrexi* renders the Hebrew *h^e^ḳiṣothi*, 'I awake.'

19. The most mysterious thing for the psalmist in the Providence of God is the existence and apparent success of the godless. *Si*= 'if only.' The psalmist would solve his own problems by the destruction of the 'sinners.' In the second half of the verse, according to the Vulgate, he directly addresses the godless ones whose destruction he desires. He calls them 'men of blood,' *i.e.*, murderers; he will have no dealings with them.

20. There is considerable difference here between the Greek and Hebrew texts: the Greeks apparently took the Hebrew *yom^e^rukha*, 'they rise up against Thee,' as if it were some form of *'amar*, to speak; and *'arekha*, which may mean, 'Thy enemies,' the Greeks read as if it were the plural of *'ir*, 'city,' with the suffix of the second person. It must be confessed that the Hebrew is almost as hopelessly obscure as the Vulgate. One can scarcely hope to improve here on the version of Jerome:

Qui contradicunt tibi scelerate;
Elati sunt frustra adversarii tui.

Accipient takes the place of the Massoretic *nasu'*, 'lifted up.' It is impossible to attach any meaning in the context to 'taking (or seizing) the cities' of God.

21. Though the psalmist does not understand the policy of God

towards the wicked, he will hate them, and will feel disgust (*tabescebam*) with them.

22. He will regard them as his deadly foes, because they are the enemies of God.

23. The psalmist begs God, the All-seeing, to test whether his thoughts as expressed throughout the psalm are true and sincere. He wishes now to be subjected to the closest scrutiny by God. At the beginning of the psalm he had spoken of himself as constrained by the watchful care of God: now he realises that the pious have naught to fear from the divine scrutiny, and prays therefore that God may look deeply into his heart and keep him on the path of truth.

24. *Via iniquitatis*: the Hebrew has 'a way of tribulation,' *i.e.*, a way leading to tribulation or pain. The way of eternity (*via æterna*) is a way that leads to eternal life.

PSALM CXXXIX

A PRAYER FOR PROTECTION AGAINST TREACHEROUS ENEMIES

THIS psalm, like Psalms lxiii and cxix, depicts the psalmist as constantly harassed by the calumny of unscrupulous adversaries. The psalmist speaks of himself and his associates as poor, lowly, just and upright : his adversaries he describes as wicked, men of violence, godless, men of blood. Though the foes of the psalmist are called ' men of violence ' and ' men of blood,' their chief crime appears to be ruthless slandering of the psalmist : their tongues bite as dangerously as the fang of a snake ; they keep a store of poison, as it were, under their lips. They are ever devising schemes to bring the psalmist to disaster (verses 2–6). In verses 7–12 the psalmist prays that the judgment of God may come down on his foes as it came down on the Cities of the Plain. The psalmist is confident that men of evil speech (*viri linguosi*) cannot enjoy continued prosperity in the land ; they will soon be hurled away to destruction.

In verses 13–14 the psalmist expresses his firm confidence that the Lord will procure justice for himself and his associates. The just and upright will then give thanks to Yahweh, and will dwell in the light of the Lord's favour. According to the majority of modern non-Catholic critics this psalm echoes the religious controversies of post-Exilic Judaism. Yet it must be said that the attribution of the psalm to David, which is made in the title, is not directly excluded by anything in the poem itself. Commentators who favour the Davidic origin of the psalm find in it a picture of the treacherous machinations of the supporters of Saul (such as Doeg) against David.

1. In finem, Psalmus David.

2. Eripe me Domine ab homine malo : a viro iniquo eripe me.

3. Qui cogitaverunt iniquitates in corde : tota die constituebant prælia.

4. Acuerunt linguas suas sicut serpentis : venenum aspidum sub labiis eorum.

1. For the choir-master : a Psalm of David.

2. Rescue me, Lord, from evil men,
Save me from men of violence,

3. Who devise evil things in their heart,
And evermore instigate strife.

4. They whet their tongues like a serpent's
Poison of adders is beneath their lips ;

5. Custodi me Domine de manu peccatoris : et ab hominibus iniquis eripe me.
Qui cogitaverunt supplantare gressus meos :
6. Absconderunt superbi laqueum mihi :
Et funes extenderunt in laqueum : juxta iter scandalum posuerunt mihi.

5. Save me, O Lord, from the hand of the godless,
From violent men preserve me,
Who plan to trip up my steps ;

6. The proud hide a snare and cords for me :
They stretch out a net by the roadside
Traps they set for me.

7. Dixi Domino : Deus meus es tu : exaudi Domine vocem deprecationis meæ.
8. Domine, Domine virtus salutis meæ : obumbrasti super caput meum in die belli :
9. Ne tradas me Domine a desiderio meo peccatori : cogitaverunt contra me, ne derelinquas me, ne forte exaltentur.

7. I say to the Lord : Thou art my God ;
Hear, O Lord, my plaintive cry,

8. O Lord, Adonai, Thou, my strong help !
Thou shieldest my head in the day of battle.
9. Abandon me not, Lord, to the desires of the godless ;
They plan evil against me ;
Abandon me not, that they may not conquer.

10. Caput circuitus eorum : labor labiorum ipsorum operiet eos.

10. The heads of those who encompass ' me ' round
The mischief of their own lips shall o'erwhelm ;

11. Cadent super eos carbones in ignem dejicies eos : in miseriis non subsistent.

11. Glowing coals shall descend upon them,
Into fire Thou shalt cast them ;
In wretchedness they shall come to naught.

12. Vir linguosus non dirigentur in terra : virum injustum mala capient in interitu.

12. The man of evil tongue shall not stand firm in the land ;
Misfortune shall sweep off the godless to destruction.

13. Cognovi quia faciet Dominus judicium inopis : et vindictam pauperum.
14. Verumtamen justi confitebuntur nomini tuo : et habitabunt recti cum vultu tuo.

13. I know that God the Lord procureth justice for the weak,
And vengeance for the poor.
14. Therefore the just will praise Thy name,
And the pious shall dwell before Thee.

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2. *Homo* and *vir* are to be understood in the collective sense—as can be seen from the plural verbs in verses 3–4.

3. *Tota die* : the godless foes of the psalmist are ceaselessly engaged in plotting trouble for the psalmist and his friends.

Constituebant : the Hebrew would be better rendered by *concitant*. *Prælia* means here contentions and disputes, rather than actual fighting—like ' war ' in verse 8 below.

4. The activity of the godless is confined chiefly to slanderous and treacherous speech. Their tongues are as deadly as the fangs of a snake. Like the snake, too, they keep a store of poison beneath their lips. It will be remembered that this description of sinners

appears in the celebrated Pauline mosaic of Psalm-texts in Rom. iii. 10–18, whence it has found its way into the Vulgate of Ps. xiii. 3. *Cf.* Ps. ix. 28 ; liv. 22 ; lvii. 5.

5. *Supplantare* : a good rendering of the Hebrew. The enemies avoid open hostility, and trust altogether to treachery.

6. *Cf.* Ps. ix. 16 ; xxx. 5 ; lvi. 7 ; lxiii. 6. Verses 5 and 6 should be thus arranged :

Qui cogitant supplantare gressus meos,
Qui abscondunt mihi laqueum et funes,
Et extendunt laqueum juxta iter ;
Scandalum ponunt mihi.

Superbi ought, probably, to be omitted, as a gloss. The setting of snares and traps is imagery taken from the methods of capturing big game (*cf.* Ps. cxli. 4).

7. In his tribulation the psalmist invokes the help of the Lord.

8. The *virtus salutis meæ* reminds one of Is. lix. 17 :

Indutus est justitia ut lorica,
Et galea salutis in capite ejus

(*cf.* Ephes. vi. 17). Yahweh is the psalmist's helmet of safety.

Obumbrasti : the use of the perfect here implies, either that the psalmist bases his hope of delivery in the future on Yahweh's protection in the past, or that he is as certain of receiving protection as if it had already been given (the prophetic perfect).

In die belli : the Hebrew has, ' in the day of arming.' The psalmist is not thinking of preparation for actual battle, but of defence against the machinations of his foes.

9. *Ne tradas me, Domine,* etc. : the Hebrew here means, ' Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked.' The Greeks took *ma'ᵃwaye* (' desires of ') as if it were *me'ᵉwayai,* ' from my desires.' The only possible meaning that could be given to the Latin *a desiderio meo in* the present context, is ' against my wish.' Jerome renders here correctly : *Ne des Domine desideria impii.*

Cogitaverunt : the Greeks read here *zamᵉmu,* instead of the Massoretic *zᵉmamo,* ' his treachery ' : *contra me* has nothing corresponding to it in the Hebrew.

Ne derelinquas me : the *me* is not represented in the Massoretic text ; *ne derelinquas* is an inaccurate rendering of the Hebrew *'al taphek*—for this means, ' Permit not to succeed '—the object being ' his treachery.' It would seem as if the Greeks vocalised the verb as though it were a form of the Aramaic verb *nᵉphak* (to go out, to go away) and read it *tippok.* Jerome renders, *Scelera ejus ne effundantur.*

Ne forte exaltentur : the Hebrew would be better rendered by an active verb. The Greeks made the verb here to depend on the *'al,* (*ne*) of the first clause (*ne des*). It is possible that the end of verse 9 ought to be connected immediately with the beginning of verse 10

and that *caput* in verse 10 ought to be regarded as the object of *exaltant* (taking the verb as active) in verse 9. The serious objection to this collocation is the presence in the Hebrew text of the directive and dividing word *Selah* after *yarumu* (*exaltant*). It has been proposed to shift *Selah* to a position immediately in front of *yarumu*, and thus to remove the difficulty in connecting 'head' with 'exalt.'

If we shift *Selah* as proposed, and connect *yarumu* with the beginning of verse 9 we get the sense:

> They who are round about them lift the head,

and as *circuitus eorum* is based probably on a misreading of a Hebrew word which ought to have been rendered *circuitus mei*, we get the sense,

> They who are round about me raise the head,

the reference being to the proud attitudes of the psalmist's foes. *Circuitus mei* represents the Massoretic *m^e^sibbai*='those who are round about me': the Greeks apparently read *m^e^sibbam*, 'those who are round about them.' Taken in the way proposed the first part of verse 10 would be a sort of contrast to the second:

> "Those who are round about me keep their head high:
> Yet the mischief begotten by their own lips will overthrow them."

The psalmist accuses them, that is, of keeping up a hypocritical appearance of respectability, and announces to them that the evil they devise for him will result in their own destruction.

In this explanation of the difficult words in verse 10*a*, the Hebrew *ro'sh* has been taken in the sense given to it by the Vulgate—*caput*: but *ro'sh* can also mean 'poison,' and Jerome understood it in the sense of poison, or bitter speech, for he translates 10*a* *Amaritudo convivarum eorum*, 'the poison of their feasts.' Jerome makes no attempt, however, in his version to connect 10*a* with the preceding verse, and though the reference to poison in verse 4 makes the rendering of *ro'sh* as 'poison' not altogether improbable, it seems to me better to adhere to the Vulgate rendering, *caput*, and to explain the verse in close connection with the end of verse 9, as proposed.

Labor labiorum: the mischief produced by their lips. The traps they have laid will, in the end, prove to be their own destruction.

11. *Cadent*: a slight change in the Hebrew consonantal text admits of the rendering 'May he rain down': the Lord is besought to send on the sinners a destruction like that of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Dejicies: in the Hebrew, 'Let Him cast down' (*dejiciat*).

In miseriis: this ought to be read with *dejiciat*. The Hebrew word here rendered *miseriæ* is obscure: Jerome translates it with *foveæ*.

Non subsistent: this ought to be taken as a separate clause=*ut non subsistant* (or better, as Jerome has it, *consurgant*). The psalmist

prays that his adversaries may never recover from the disaster which the Lord will send upon them.

Vir linguosus: the Hebrew has, 'Man of tongue.' The psalmist's adversaries do all their mischief by means of speech. *Cf.* Ps. c. 5.

Non dirigetur: 'shall not be established'—the detractor shall not have prosperity. The 'land' is probably Palestine.

Virum injustum: the Hebrew has, 'the man of violence.' *In interitu* ought to be *in interitum*: misfortune will overtake, and will sweep away to destruction the man of violence.

13. This is the ground of the psalmist's confident endurance of evil: the Lord will in the end procure justice for the pious, and the wicked will receive due requital.

14. Dwelling before the Lord implies at once security and happiness. *Cf.* Ps. x. 8; xv. 11; lx. 8.

PSALM CXL

BETTER TO BE CHASTISED BY GOD THAN TO BE HONOURED BY SINNERS!

THE psalmist prays that his tongue may be guarded and his heart restrained from evil things—so that he may have no dealings with the wicked. It would seem as if the psalmist and his associates were being tempted towards worldliness and sin. Perhaps there is question of temptations to abandon some of the stricter tenets of Judaism, and the tempters are, possibly, Jews of high rank and great wealth who have made approaches towards heathenism. But the psalmist declares that it is better to be rebuked by the Just One than to be flattered by sinners. He will take no part in the luxuries of sinners, but the gentle words of chiding and warning which come from the Lord he will receive as one receives an anointing on the head with precious ointment. Lest in a moment of weakness he might yield to the seductions of the worldly and wicked, the psalmist prays that their leaders may be cast headlong down the rocks, so that the simpler ones among them may learn that the words which the psalmist speaks are words of power. The psalmist and his comrades are in urgent need of help from the Lord. Like clods scattered over the surface of the ground their bodies are scattered, as it were, close to the greedy mouth of Sheol. If they are not quickly rescued they will be swallowed up. Hence the psalmist declares that his eyes are fixed on the Lord, looking eagerly for a token of coming rescue. Let not Yahweh fail him—lest in spite of his faith and protestations, he become a laughing-stock among the wicked. Let the wicked be entrapped in the snares and nets which they have set for him and his associates. The speedy discomfiture of his foes will have the twofold effect of removing the temptations which are assailing him, and of setting him right before the world as a loyal servant of the Lord.

The psalm is attributed to David in the superscription, but modern critics are not prepared to accept for it a Davidic origin. It has been inferred (quite wrongly we think) from verse 2 that the daily sacrifices in the Temple were no longer being regularly conducted when the psalm was composed. The psalmist does not, as some writers seem to fancy, hope that his prayer may serve as a substitute for sacrificial offerings that are no longer taking place; he prays that his words of prayer may ascend before the Lord as pleasingly as the odour of the sacrificial incense and the Minḥah arises to the

throne of Yahweh. The Massoretic text of this psalm is in a very unsatisfactory condition, and it would seem, too, that the Greek translators were here less successful in their rendering than in most of the other psalms. Thus, while the general meaning of the poem is clear enough, the sense of some of the verses is almost hopelessly obscure.

1. Psalmus David.

Domine clamavi ad te, exaudi me: intende voci meæ, cum clamavero ad te.
2. Dirigatur oratio mea sicut incensum in conspectu tuo: elevatio manuum mearum sacrificium vespertinum.

3. Pone Domine custodiam ori meo: et ostium circumstantiæ labiis meis.
4. Non declines cor meum in verba malitiæ, ad excusandas excusationes in peccatis.
Cum hominibus operantibus iniquitatem: et non communicabo cum electis eorum.

5. Corripiet me justus in misericordia, et increpabit me: oleum autem peccatoris non impinguet caput meum.
Quoniam adhuc et oratio mea in beneplacitis eorum:
6. Absorpti sunt juncti petræ judices eorum.
Audient verba mea quoniam potuerunt:

7. Sicut crassitudo terræ erupta est super terram.
Dissipata sunt ossa nostra secus infernum:
8. Quia ad te Domine, Domine oculi mei: in te speravi, non auferas animam meam.

9. Custodi me a laqueo, quem statuerunt mihi: et a scandalis operantium iniquitatem.
10. Cadent in retiaculo ejus peccatores: singulariter sum ego donec transeam.

1. A Psalm of David.

I cry to Thee, O Lord, hearken to me!
Give heed to my voice when I cry to Thee
2. Let my prayer arise like incense unto Thee
Let the raising of my hands be like the evening sacrifice!

3. Set a watch, O Lord, on my mouth,
Guard well the gate of my lips.

4. Let not my heart tend to things evil,
Nor seek excuses for sinning
With men who do wickedness:
Nay, I will have no part in their choice bits!

5. Let the Just One chide me in kindness,
And rebuke me:
But let not the oil of sinners anoint my head.
For even until now my prayer is opposed to their desire.
6. Their judges shall be dashed down rocks;
Men will learn that my words are powerful

7. Like clods strewn over the earth,
Our bones are strewn at the mouth of Sheol;

8. But to Thee, O Lord, my eyes are turned;
In Thee I trust: snatch not away my life!

9. Save me from the snare they have laid for me,
And from the traps of evil-doers.
10. Into their own net sinners shall fall,
But I shall pass (safely) on.

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2. The 'incense' is the incense offered morning and evening on the golden altar of incense (Exod. xxx. 7). The *sacrificium vesper-*

tinum is the '*Minḥah* of evening'—the *minḥah* being the offering of meal and oil and incense which served as an accompaniment to the holocaust offered each morning and evening (Lev. ii. 1, 2). The evening *Minḥah* may be mentioned here because (as Theodoret thinks) the psalmist is seriously troubled, and night (=evening) is the symbol of trouble. The psalmist prays in verse 2 that his prayers may be as pleasing to God as the ceremonial of the Temple worship. The verse does not imply that the ordinary liturgy of the Temple is no longer being performed.

'Raising of hands' was one of the chief gestures of prayer.

3. *Custodiam*: the psalmist prays that he may be restrained from uttering things undue or unbecoming—such as words of friendship or sympathy for his adversaries.

Ostium circumstantiæ: the Hebrew (slightly emended) means: 'Guard the door of my lips.' The Greeks took *niṣrah* (which is the imperative of *naṣar*, 'keep,' 'guard') as a substantive=gate (*cf.* Mich. vii. 5). 'Watch the gate' thus became with the Greeks, 'a gate of watchfulness.'

4. As in verse 3 the psalmist prayed to be saved from the utterance of evil words, so here he begs to be protected from the doing of evil deeds.

Verba malitiæ: evil things generally—here, in particular, evil deeds.

Ad excusandas excusationes in peccatis: the Hebrew has: 'So as to do deeds in godlessness.' The Greeks understood the phrase as meaning 'to seek excuses for sinning.' Jerome, following Symmachus, as is frequently his wont, renders, *Volvere cogitationes impias.* The meaning of the Hebrew is not really obscure, and it is probable that the Greek translators simply mistranslated. The Syriac version renders quite correctly.

Cum hominibus, etc.: the psalmist is fearful of being induced to associate with the impious in their evil doings.

Cum electis eorum: the *electa* are the 'choice things' in general of the wicked—not merely food and drink, but all sense-enjoyments, luxury of life, etc.

5. The connection of this verse with the preceding can be gathered from Prov. ix. *7ff.*:

> "Rebuke not the scoffer, for else he will hate thee:
> Rebuke the wise man and he will love thee.
> Instruct the wise man, and he will grow in wisdom;
> Instruct the pious man, and he will grow in insight."

Blows from a friend are better than caresses from a foe. The psalmist will gladly receive the rebuke of the *Justus*, but he will have nothing to do with the *delectibilia* of the wicked. It may be that the *justus* here is the Lord Himself. The psalmist willingly accepts his present chastisements because the Lord has ordained them.

Oleum autem peccatoris, etc. : in this phrase the Vulgate seems to include among the *delectabilia* which the psalmist rejects the *oleum peccatoris*. The psalmist will not accept any token of respect or kindness at the hands of sinners. The pouring of ointment on the heads of honoured guests was a feature of Oriental hospitality. But the psalmist will have no share in the hospitality of the wicked. If the Vulgate is considered solely in itself this explanation of the passage in question is reasonable enough. In the Massoretic text, however, a very different thought is suggested : 'Oil of the head (*i.e.*, precious ointment) my head will not reject.' The correction of the Just One is compared to precious ointment which the psalmist receives with delight. Thus understood the passage would be a suitable parallel to 5*a*. The *oleum capitis=oleum optimum*, as can be seen from Cantic. of Canticles iv. 14 ; Ezech. xxvii. 22, etc.

The Greek translators apparently read *shemen rasha'*, 'oil of a sinner,' instead of the Massoretic *shemen ro'sh*, 'oil of the head' (or, possibly, they read *ro'sh*, and took it to mean 'poison,' and, therefore, 'sinner'). Jerome has : *Oleum amaritudinis non inpinguet caput meum*—evidently understanding *ro'sh* as 'poison,' or 'bitterness.'

Impinguet : the Hebrew verb *yani* is usually explained as contracted from *yani'*—the hiphil of *nu'*, 'to refuse,' 'to restrain,' 'to frustrate.' The Greeks probably did not know the exact meaning of the word, and connected it with the Arabic *nayyun*, 'fat.' In the Hebrew 'my head' is the subject of the verb : in the Latin it is the object.

Quoniam adhuc . . . eorum : the Hebrew here is only slightly less obscure than the Latin. In the translation above *beneplacita* has been rendered 'desire' : in the Hebrew the corresponding word is *ra'oth*, 'iniquities,' and the clause in Hebrew runs : 'But my prayer is against their iniquities'—the 'their' being quite obscure. The sense seems to be that the psalmist perseveres, in spite of all approaches and blandishments on the part of the wicked, to oppose them steadily by his prayers. *Beneplacita* has arisen through the Greek rendering of *ra'oth* as if it were from the Aramaic *r^{e}'ah* (to which would correspond in Hebrew *raṣah*), 'to take pleasure.'

6. *Absorpti sunt juncti petræ judices eorum* : the text in verse 6 is exceptionally obscure. The Hebrew text is here usually rendered :

> Their judges are hurled down along the rocks,
> And men listen to my words because they are pleasant.

The Greek translators seem to have had before them a Hebrew text practically the same as the Massoretic. *Potuerunt* is probably due to a corruption of ἡδύνθησαν into ἠδυνήθησαν. *Absorpti sunt* ought to be something like *præcipitantur*. *Juncti petræ*, which corresponds to the Greek ἐχόμενα πέτρας, seems to imply a reading ἐχόμενοι πέτρας ;

it is sufficiently close to the Hebrew *bidhe sela'*—' on (or, along) the rock '—in touch with the face of the rock as they fall.

The chief difficulty of the Hebrew text is to explain how the enemies of the psalmist could come to look on the news of the destruction of their leaders (' judges ') as something pleasant (*quoniam placuerunt*). The reading *potuerunt* can be more easily explained; the enemy would learn from the destruction of their leaders that the words of the psalmist were indeed words of power. There is no way, however, of deriving *potuerunt* from the Massoretic text, and we have said above that it is due to a corruption of the primitive Septuagint text.

If we abide by the Vulgate text of verse 6 we can regard it as describing the destruction of the chief enemies of the psalmist, and as declaring that the fate of the *judices* will convince their followers that the standpoint of the psalmist is right, and that the power of the Lord is behind his words. With the casting down along the rock compare the narrative of the death of Jezebel, 4 Kings ix. 32*f*.

7. *Sicut crassitudo terræ*, etc. : The Hebrew means :

> As one ploughs and harrows the earth,
> So are our bones scattered at the mouth of Sheol.

The psalmist wishes to say that the condition of himself and his associates is sorely perilous. Their bodies are, as it were, like clods lying thickly strewn over a ploughed field, and the place where they lie is close to the jaws of Sheol. If they are not quickly rescued they will be swallowed up by Sheol.

Crassitudo takes the place of the Hebrew *poleaḥ*, which means ' one who ploughs,' a husbandman (the same root is present in Fellah, a peasant).

Erupta est: the Greeks must have read *y^e^bukka'* where the Massoretic text has *boḳea'*, ' one that cleaves, or harrows.' The Hebrew has the word ' earth ' only once—but the Greeks must have read it with the two verbs ' plough ' and ' cleave.'

Van Sante renders verse 7 thus :

> *Sicut quum arator proscindit terram,*
> *disperguntur ossa nostra ad portam orci.*

8. *Quia*=' yet.' With verse 8*a* compare Ps. xxiv. 15.

Non auferas: the Hebrew *'al t^e^'ar* means, probably, ' Do not pour out ' : the psalmist prays that God may not destroy his life by pouring it out with his blood.

9. *Scandala*=snares : Jerome has here, *Et de offendiculis operantium iniquitatem.*

10. The psalmist prays that his foes may be caught in the traps and snares they have set for him.

Singulariter sum ego donec transeam: the Hebrew means : ' May the impious fall into their own net all at once, while I pass on.' The

Greeks grouped the words of the Hebrew text incorrectly: *yaḥadh* (all at once, or 'all together'), which is here rendered *singulariter*, ought to be read with *yipp*^{e}*lu* (=*cadant*). Jerome gives the sense correctly:

> *Incident in rete ejus impii simul;*
> *ego autem transibo.*

When his foes have all stumbled into the snares which they had set for him, the psalmist can proceed safely on his way.

PSALM CXLI

A PRAYER OF ONE WHO IS PERSECUTED AND FRIENDLESS

THE psalmist is in bitter need of help. He is shut up, as it were, in prison: his path is beset with snares: enemies are around him on every side: he has no friend who would give him a thought: his heart, overwhelmed with sadness, is fainting within him. Yet, in the midst of his grief and desolation, he turns to the Lord and pours out his soul before Him. The Lord knows well the paths on which the psalmist walks, and cannot refuse to give heed to his cries and tears. The more the world abandons the psalmist the more eagerly and trustingly he turns to the Lord: Yahweh is indeed his sole refuge and his sole portion on earth. Let Yahweh therefore hear his prayer for help, and lead him forth from the prison of his wretchedness! When the psalmist is rescued he will praise and thank the Lord and the just will gather round him to join with him in his gladness and his thanksgiving.

It has been suggested that Psalm cxli is a fusion of two originally independent poems—(*a*) verses 1–5, and (*b*) verses 6–8—which were put together because they were both 'Lamentations,' similar in content (though somewhat different in metrical structure). It is simpler, however, and more natural, to regard the obvious difference of the two sections in question as due to the dramatic style of the psalmist: in the first section (1–5) he describes the hostility with which he is pursued by his foes and the utter abandonment in which he is left by all who might have been expected to help him: in the second part (6–8) the poet contrasts with the hostility and neglect of men the protection and care of the Lord. Men may persecute or abandon him, but Yahweh, who knows all his ways, is his refuge and portion. If Yahweh will deign to intervene on his behalf, and lead him forth from prison, just men will rejoice thereat and the psalmist will praise the name of Yahweh. Thus explained the two parts of the psalm clearly form a literary unity.

Jewish tradition, as shown in the superscription, found the occasion of this psalm in the circumstances described in 1 Kings xxii, and there is nothing in the contents of the psalm which is directly incompatible with that tradition. Modern non-Catholic commentators, however, refuse, for the most part, to accept the Davidic origin of the psalm, and see in the psalmist and his enemies the contending parties of

religious disputes in later Judaism. The psalm resembles in many points Ps. lxiii, cxix and cxxxix, and should be studied in close connection with those psalms. The possibility of regarding verses 2–5 as applying typically to Our Lord is immediately obvious.

1. Intellectus David, cum esset in spelunca, oratio.

1. A *Maskil* of David when he was in the cave : a prayer.

2. Voce mea ad Dominum clamavi : voce mea ad Dominum deprecatus sum :
3. Effundo in conspectu ejus orationem meam, et tribulationem meam ante ipsum pronuntio.
4. In deficiendo ex me spiritum meum, et tu cognovisti semitas meas.

2. With my voice I cry to the Lord,
With my voice I make plaint to the Lord ;
3. I pour out before Him my prayer,
My distress I declare before Him.
4. Though my spirit faileth within me
Yet Thou knowest my paths.

In via hac, qua ambulabam, absconderunt laqueum mihi.
5. Considerabam ad dexteram et videbam : et non erat qui cognosceret me.
Periit fuga a me, et non est qui requirat animam meam.

On this way which I traverse
They hid for me a snare
5. I look to the right, and spy out,
But there is none that heedeth me :
Means of escape hath failed me,
There is none that careth for me.

6. Clamavi ad te Domine, dixi : Tu es spes mea, portio mea in terra viventium.
7. Intende ad deprecationem meam : quia humiliatus sum nimis.
Libera me a persequentibus me : quia confortati sunt super me.
8. Educ de custodia animam meam ad confitendum nomini tuo : me exspectant justi, donec retribuas mihi.

6. I cry to the Lord,
I say : " Thou art my hope,
My portion in the land of the living ! "
7. Give heed to my complaint,
For I am lowly indeed.
Rescue me from my persecutors,
For They are too strong for me
8. Lead me forth from prison
That I may praise Thy name :
The just wait for me,
When Thou dealest kindly with me.

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1. *Intellectus* : a *Maskil* ; *cf.* Ps. xli. 1. The psalm is a ' Prayer ' as well as a *Maskil*. *Cf.* Ps. xvi, lxxxv, lxxxix, ci.

The ' cave ' is usually taken to be the Cave of Adullam (rather than the Cave of Engaddi, 1 Kings xxiv. 4) : the superscription is based on 1 Kings xxii. Modern commentators regard the placing of the scene of the ' Prayer ' in the cave as due to the words, ' Lead me forth from prison ' in verse 8.

2. *Voce mea* : the Hebrew has, literally :

My voice—I cry to Yahweh,
My voice—I plead with Yahweh.

' Voice ' and ' I ' are subjects of the verbs. The addition of *voce* to

clamavi and *deprecatus sum* means that the psalmist cries aloud and pleads aloud, that is, with great intensity.

3. *Effundo orationem meam*: *cf.* the superscription of Ps. ci.

4. *In deficiendo ex me spiritum meum*: the construction is natural in Hebrew and Greek, but quite out of place in Latin. Jerome has, *Cum anxius fuerit in me spiritus meus.* For the construction see Introd., p. xlv. For the thought of the verse *cf.* Ps. lxxvi. 4. It is better to connect verse 4 closely with verse 3. The psalmist makes his prayer while his heart is sinking with despondency because of the difficulty of his position. He turns to the Lord because the Lord knows his 'ways' (the Massoretic text has the singular 'way'). His 'ways'=his whole career, and particularly, his actual condition at the moment. Since the Lord knows all the circumstances of the psalmist's life, it is but natural that the psalmist should turn to Him for help. The *via qua ambulabam* is the way of conduct which the psalmist has pursued. For the hiding of snares on the way compare Ps. cxxxix. 6. Compare also Eccli. ix. 13:

> Know that thou marchest amid snares,
> And walkest upon nets.

Cf. Job xviii. 8, 9.

5. *Considerabam ad dexteram et videbam*: the Greek translators read here in their Hebrew text two absolute infinitives *ḥabbeṭ* and *ra'oh*, rightly rendering them by finite verbs. The psalmist looks to the right because at the right he would expect to see his supporter or protector. *Cf.* Ps. cix. 1, 5; cxx. 5; xv. 8; cviii. 6.

Videbam must mean 'I look closely,' 'I spy out.' The text would be smoother if we could supply here *ad sinistram.*

Qui cognosceret: who recognises me as a friend, and is, therefore, ready to stand by me.

Periit fuga a me: *cf.* Amos ii. 14; Jer. xxv. 35. *Fuga*=means of escape, or place to fly to.

Non est qui requirat animam meam: the 'seeking' implied here is not hostile (as in Ps. xxxix. 15; lxii. 10; Matt. ii. 20) but friendly—an inquiring after, a taking an interest in.

6. The psalmist turns from men to God.

Spes mea: Hebrew, 'my refuge.'

Portio mea in terra viventium: *cf.* Ps. xv. 5; xxix. 6; cxviii. 57. The psalmist has no friend on earth but the Lord. 'Land of the living' means primarily Palestine, and then the world of mortals generally. The psalmist has no hope in this life but Yahweh: he wishes and hopes only for the friendship and protection of the Lord.

7. *Deprecationem*: Hebrew, 'my loud cry'—*rinnathi.*

Confortati sunt super me: they have become too powerful for me.

8. *Custodia*: the Hebrew word corresponding, *masger*, occurs only here in the Psalter. The 'prison' has been most commonly

explained as the Cave of Adullam (1 Kings xxii) which David made his headquarters for a while during the persecution directed against him by Saul. Many commentators, regarding the psalm as a complaint of the Exiles in Babylon, have interpreted the *masger* as the Babylonian captivity. The word *masger* need not be necessarily taken as implying an actual imprisonment of the psalmist : it could refer, just as well, to the constraint of misery and wretchedness.

Ad confitendum : so that I may praise. If the psalmist is delivered from his tribulations he will praise and thank the Lord.

Me expectant justi : the Hebrew seems to mean :

> The just will gather round me
> When Thou dealest kindly with me.

The just will flock round the rescued psalmist to offer him their congratulations, and to share in his rejoicing. Some commentators see here a reference to the gathering of the just from among the Gentiles around the Messianic Israel.

Donec retribuas mihi : whenever Thou dealest kindly with me.

PSALM CXLII

A PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE AND GUIDANCE

THIS is the seventh of the Penitential Psalms. It is rightly classed as a penitential Psalm, for it is full of the consciousness of the psalmist's sinfulness. The poet speaks, as many commentators believe, in the name of Israel. The nation is in desperate straits : its enemies have trampled it under foot : its spirit is well nigh broken ; it is at the brink of the grave. All this Israel has deserved through her sins. The nation would be hopeless were it not for the memory of the ancient days when Yahweh was its Leader and Protector. To her leader of the old heroic days Israel turns again, and spreads out her hands to Him in prayer. As a parched soil thirsts for the rain, so thirsts the soul of Israel for Yahweh. She has forfeited His favour—but surely He will not exact from her the full penalty of disloyalty—for what mortal is just before the Lord ? Humbly, then, as one begging for a favour, Israel begs from Yahweh deliverance from her sorrows. " Hear me quickly, O Lord," she prays, " lest I utterly perish. Show quickly Thy favour lest I go down to Sheol. I have sinned against Thee, but do Thou teach me to walk according to Thy will. Rescue me, and let Thy Spirit guide me henceforth. For Thy name's sake save me from my misery, for I am wholly Thine—I am Thy slave ! Destroy my foes, therefore, and show favour to Thy slave ! "

The title of this psalm, *Psalmus David*, may be explained as meaning a ' Davidic Psalm,' *i.e.*, a psalm which enshrines Davidic thoughts and is constructed after the manner of genuinely Davidic compositions. Many of the older commentators looked on this psalm as a product of the Exile. More recent writers are inclined to seek for the occasion of this poem, considered as a sort of national Lamentation, in the sorrows and disappointments of the first post-Exilic century.

1. Psalmus David, Quando persequebatur eum Absalom filius eius.	1. A prayer of David, when his son Absalom pursued him.
Domine exaudi orationem meam : auribus percipe obsecrationem meam in veritate tua : exaudi me in tua justitia.	Hear, O Lord, my prayer ! Hearken to my entreaty in Thy truth ; Hear me in Thy justice !

2. Et non intres in judicium cum servo tuo: quia non justificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens.

2. Enter not into judgment with Thy servant,
For no mortal is just before Thee.

3. Quia persecutus est inimicus animam meam: humiliavit in terra vitam meam.
Collocavit me in obscuris sicut mortuos sæculi:
4. Et anxiatus est super me spiritus meus, in me turbatum est cor meum.

3. For the enemy oppresseth my soul;
He casteth down my life to the ground;
He thrusteth me into darkness,
Like those who died long ago.

4. My spirit is troubled within me.

5. Memor fui dierum antiquorum, meditatus sum in omnibus operibus tuis: in factis manuum tuarum meditabar.
6. Expandi manus meas ad te: anima mea sicut terra sine aqua tibi.

5. I recall the days of old;
I reflect on all Thy deeds;
I ponder on the works of Thy hands.

6. I spread out my hands to Thee;
My soul turneth, like soil that is parched, to Thee.

7. Velociter exaudi me Domine: defecit spiritus meus.
Non avertas faciem tuam a me: et similis ero descendentibus in lacum.
8. Auditam fac mihi mane misericordiam tuam: quia in te speravi.
Notam fac mihi viam, in qua ambulem: quia ad te levavi animam meam.
9. Eripe me de inimicis meis Domine, ad te confugi:

7. Hear me quickly, O Lord!
My spirit faileth.
Turn not from me Thy face,
Lest I become like to those that go down to the grave!
8 Let me learn in the morning of Thy favour,
For in Thee I trust.
Show me the path I must traverse,
For to Thee I lift up my soul.

9. Rescue me from my foes, O Lord!
I fly unto Thee.

10. Doce me facere voluntatem tuam, quia Deus meus es tu.
Spiritus tuus bonus deducet me in terram rectam:
11. Propter nomen tuum Domine vivificabis me, in æquitate tua.
Educes de tribulatione animam meam:
12. Et in misericordia tua disperdes inimicos meos.
Et perdes omnes, qui tribulant animam meam: et quoniam ego servus tuus sum.

10. Teach me to do Thy will,
For Thou art my God!
Let Thy good Spirit guide me
On the right path.
11. For Thy Name's sake, O Lord, sustain me;
In Thy justice, save my soul from sorrow!

12. In Thy graciousness destroy my foes,
And bring to naught all those that vex me,
For I am Thy servant!

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1. *Quando persequebatur eum Absalom filius ejus*: these words are not represented in the Hebrew title: they are wanting also in some Codices of the Septuagint, and were not known, apparently, to the older Greek commentators. The situation implied in the Vulgate

superscription is that described in 2 Kings xvii. The psalm is more easily understood of the Israelite people at a time of national humiliation, than of David flying from the rebel army of Absalom. The memory of Israel's greatness in the olden days would scarcely serve as an inspiration to David when he was abandoning his capital to Absalom, whereas it was just such a memory as that which alone could give Israel comfort in the sorrows of the Exile. The frequent echoes of other psalms, and of other Scriptures of the Old Testament, which occur in Psalm cxlii are difficult to reconcile with the theory of its Davidic origin.

In veritate tua : the Lord's ' truth ' is His loyalty to His promises : His ' justice ' in this context must mean practically the same thing. As Bellarmine says : *Justitia illa qua Deus promissam indulgentiam poenitentibus exhibet, nihil aliud est nisi fidelitas præstandæ benignitatis eximiæ.*

2. The psalmist does not expect to be heard by God for any merits of his own. He (speaking as Israel) has sinned, and has forfeited the favour of the Lord, but if God were to exact strict retribution, no mortal could escape destruction. The second part of verse 2 is thus to be taken as the consequent of a conditional statement : If God should enter into judgment with any mortal, that mortal would fail in the trial—would fail to establish his justice before the Lord. Thus we have here practically the same thought as in the *De Profundis : Si iniquitates observaveris Domine, quis sustinebit?* The thought here is slightly different from that in Job ix. 2 :

Vere scio quod ita sit,
et quod non justificetur homo comparatus Deo,

and in Job xxv. 4*f.* :

Numquid justificari potest homo comparatus Deo,
Aut apparere mundus natus de muliere.
Ecce luna etiam non splendet,
Et stellae non sunt mundae in conspectu ejus ;
Quanto magis homo putredo, et filius hominis vermis !

(*cf.* also Job xv. 15). The point of the psalmist is that no mortal can free himself from all the charges which God might bring against him—rather than that, as compared with God, every mortal must be declared unjust. Verse 2 is used by St. Paul in Rom. iii. 10 and Gal. ii. 16.

3. This states the ground of the psalmist's prayer. Compare Ps. vii. 6.

Humiliavit in terra : according to the Hebrew the sense is, ' He has dashed me to earth and trampled on me.' 3*c* and 3*d* are borrowed from Lamentations iii. 6 : *In tenebrosis collocavit me, quasi mortuos sempiternos* (*cf.* Ps. lxxxvii. 7). The ' darkness ' is the darkness of misfortune and suffering.

Mortuos sæculi : men long dead. Jerome renders, *mortuos*

antiquos. The 'long ago' implies that they are forgotten. *Cf.* Ps. lxxxvii. 6.

4. 4*a* is a borrowing from Ps. lxxvi. 4. *Cf.* Ps. cxli. 4.

5. The psalmist finds ground for hope in the wondrous deeds which Yahweh wrought for Israel in the ancient days.

6. The stretching out of the hands is the gesture of prayer. The soul of the psalmist longs for Yahweh as a parched soil thirsts for rain. *Cf.* Ps. lxii. 2; xli. 3.

7. This verse is a fusion of Ps. xxvi. 9; xxvii. 1 and xciii. 3. The *lacus* is the grave.

9. *Mane*: 'quickly,' at the earliest possible opportunity. *Cf.* Ps. lxxxix. 14.

In verse 9 the psalmist prays not for rescue from enemies but for moral guidance. His miseries admittedly are due to his sins, and he prays, therefore, for light and help to avoid sin in future by walking on the path of virtue.

10. It was the Spirit of God, according to Nehemias ix. 20, that showed the Israelites their way in the desert: here the psalmist begs that the same Spirit may show him the true ethical path.

In terram rectam: Jerome renders, *in terra recta*: the meaning is, on a smooth or level path, a path, that is, free from the stumbling-blocks over which the psalmist has hitherto fallen.

12. It is because Israel is Yahweh's peculiar possession, His slave, that the nation has any claim on His protection. For the thought of Israel as the slave of the Lord compare Ps. lxxxv. 16; cxv. 7. The good name of Yahweh is at stake, the psalmist implies, in the failure of Israel. Hence the destruction of the psalmist's enemies is demanded in the interest of Yahweh Himself.

PSALM CXLIII

A PRAYER FOR VICTORY AND PROSPERITY

THIS psalm consists of two parts—verses 1–11, and verses 12–15. The first part is largely an imitation of the great Davidic Psalm xvii, with an admixture of extracts from Psalms viii, xxxii, xxxviii, ciii. The second part is a prayer for the fulness of Messianic blessing. The first part is a song of war and victory ; the second contains a picture of the idyllic peace which Israel is to enjoy, under the rule of her Messianic King. It is possible, perhaps, to take the psalm, as a whole, as a liturgical prayer for the deliverance of Israel from foreign oppression and for the speedy coming of her Messianic greatness.

The dependence of this psalm on Ps. xvii gives it a claim to be styled a 'Davidic Psalm.' The title, *Adversus Goliath* (to which nothing corresponds in the Hebrew), suggests the possibility that the particular Jewish community which introduced this psalm into its liturgy, felt itself to be overshadowed by its opponents, as David was by Goliath, but hoped, nevertheless, for a victory over its adversaries no less complete than David's over Goliath. Such a victory would be, as it were, the inauguration of the Messianic age.

1. Psalmus David Adversus Goliath.

Benedictus Dominus Deus meus, qui docet manus meas ad prælium, et digitos meos ad bellum.

2. Misericordia mea, et refugium meum : susceptor meus, et liberator meus :
Protector meus, et in ipso speravi : qui subdit populum meum sub me.

3. Domine quid est homo, quia innotuisti ei ? aut filius hominis, quia reputas eum ?

4. Homo vanitati similis factus est : dies ejus sicut umbra prætereunt.

5. Domine inclina cœlos tuos, et descende : tange montes, et fumigabunt.

1. A prayer of David against Goliath.

Blessed be the Lord, my God,
Who traineth my hands for battle,
And my fingers for war !

2. My Gracious One and my Refuge,
My protector and Saviour,
My Guardian in whom I trust,
Who subjectest to me the peoples !

3. Lord, what is man,
That Thou makest Thyself known to Him,
Or the child of man,
That Thou heedest Him ?

4. Man is like unto a vapour ;
His days, like a shadow, fleet by.

5. Lord, bend down Thy heavens, and descend !
Touch the mountains, that they smoke.

6. Fulgura coruscationem, et dissipabis eos : emitte sagittas tuas, et conturbabis eos :

7. Emitte manum tuam de alto, eripe me, et libera me de aquis multis : de manu filiorum alienorum.

8. Quorum os locutum est vanitatem : et dextera eorum, dextera iniquitatis.

6. Flash forth the lightning, and scatter them !
Shoot forth Thy arrows and terrify them.

7. Stretch down Thy hand from on high,
Snatch me forth and deliver me,
From the deep waters,
From the hand of strangers,

8. Whose mouth speaketh falsehood,
Whose right hand is a right hand of deceit !

9. Deus canticum novum cantabo tibi : in psalterio, decachordo psallam tibi.

10. Qui das salutem regibus : qui redemisti David servum tuum de gladio maligno :

11. Eripe me.
Et erue me de manu filiorum alienorum, quorum os locutum est vanitatem : et dextera eorum, dextera iniquitatis :

9. I sing to Thee, O God, a new song ;
I chant unto Thee with ten-stringed zither ;

10. (To Thee) who givest victory to kings,
Who didst save David Thy servant,
From the murderous sword ;

11. Rescue me : save me from the hand of strangers,
Whose mouth speaketh falsehood,
Whose right hand is a right hand of deceit !

12. Quorum filii, sicut novellæ plantationes in juventute sua.
Filiæ eorum compositæ : circumornatæ ut similitudo templi.

13. Promptuaria eorum plena; eructantia ex hoc in illud.
Oves eorum fœtosæ, abundantes in egressibus suis :

14. Boves eorum crassæ.
Non est ruina maceriæ, neque transitus : neque clamor in plateis eorum.

12. That our sons may be like saplings
In their youth,
Our daughters comely,
Adorned like a palace :

13. That our garners may be full,
Overflowing with all manner of store ;
That our sheep may be fruitful,
Thronging their pastures ;

14. That our oxen may be fat.
That there may be no breach in our wall,
No going forth of captives,
No turmoil in our streets.

15. Beatum dixerunt populum, cui hæc sunt : beatus populus, cujus Dominus Deus ejus.

15. Happy the people with whom it is thus !
Happy the people whose God is Yahweh !

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1. *Psalmus David adversus Goliath* : The Targum agrees with the Septuagint in regarding this psalm as composed by David in reference to Goliath. The Hebrew title is simply, 'By David.'

Benedictus, etc. : the first two verses are taken almost entirely from Ps. xvii. *Cf.* xvii. 3 ; xlvii. 35.

Misericordia mea : here we must supply either, 'Yahweh is,' or 'Thou art.' The expression *misericordia mea* is peculiar : it is regarded by some commentators as equivalent to *Deus misericordiae meae*. In the original, Ps. xvii. 3, we have (in the Hebrew), 'my Rock.'

Qui subdit populum meum : the Hebrew verb here rendered *subdit* denotes subjection through violence. Hence we should probably

emend 'my people' into 'the peoples' (*'ammim*) : *cf.* Ps. xvii. 48 : *Et subdis populos sub me.* The 'peoples' are, of course, the heathen enemies of Israel.

3, 4. Here we have quotations from Ps. viii. 5 and xxxviii. 6, 7. The Psalmist expresses his admiration at the goodness which the Lord shows in being gracious towards weak and lowly humanity.

Vanitas : Hebrew, *hebhel*, 'a mere breath.' *Cf.* Job viii. 9 ; xiv. 2.

5. The psalmist now begins his petition. He prays that the mercies which, according to Ps. xvii. 10, were granted to David may be shown now towards Israel. Let Yahweh reveal Himself again as a Saviour, as He did of old when His servant David was in distress ! The second half of verse 5 is from Ps. ciii. 32.

6. This is a quotation from Ps. xvii. 15.

7. *Cf.* Ps. xvii. 17. The 'many waters' symbolise the foreign enemies who threaten to over-run Israel.

8. The heathen enemies are described as deceitful and perjured. The right hand was raised in swearing, and therefore when raised for a false oath, it became a right hand of treachery, or deceit (*iniquitas*). In verse 11 the prayer of 7–8 is repeated.

9. The psalmist confidently expects the granting of his prayer. When it is granted he will sing to the Lord a 'new song' of thanksgiving. For the ten-stringed zither and the 'new song' compare Ps. xxxii. 2–3.

10. An echo of Ps. xvii. 51.

11. What the Lord did for David, He will now do for Israel.

12. Modern commentators are inclined to see in verses 12–15 a fragment of an older poem on the Messianic Age which the psalmist has incorporated into his text.

Quorum : quorum here and the *eorum* of the following verses change completely the sense of the Hebrew, which has, all through, the possessive of the first person—*our* sons, *our* daughters, *our* garners, *our* sheep, *our* cattle. The Greek translators evidently took verses 12–15*a* as a description of the prosperity of Israel's foes, and assumed, apparently, that verse 15*b* was intended to emphasise the spiritual blessings of Israel as against the material advantages of her foes. It is far more natural to follow the Massoretes in reading the first person plural. Thus the verses 12–15 become a prayer for the speedy ushering in of the Messianic days. In those days all the glories of David's reign will be renewed. Note how the psalmist prays for three chief blessings—numerous and comely children, wealth in corn and kine, and peace. *Cf.* Ps. cxxvi and cxxvii.

Novellæ plantationes in juventute sua : Jeromes renders here (reproducing correctly the Hebrew possessive) :

Ut sint filii nostri quasi plantatio
Crescens in adulescentia sua.

The psalmist prays that the sons of his people may be like a thriving

plantation in their youth. *Cf.* Ps. cxxvii. 3 : *Filii tui sicut novellæ olivarum.*

Compositæ : Jerome has here, *Filiæ nostrae quasi anguli ornati ad similitudinem templi.* The Massoretic text seems to mean :

> ' Our daughters are like corner-pillars,
> Fitly carved as for a palace.'

The Greeks translated *zawiyyoth* (' pillars ') as if it were from the Aramaic *ziw*, ' brightness,' so that *compositæ* ought to mean something like ' brightly robed.'

Similitudo templi : the Hebrew *hekhal* may mean either ' temple ' or ' palace.' The daughters are to be as graceful and beautiful as the finely carved pillars in a temple or palace.

13. *Promptuaria* : ' store-rooms,' ' garners ' : read *nostra*, instead of *eorum.*

Eructantia ex hoc in illud : in the Hebrew the sense is, ' Producing kind upon kind ' : the familiar Aramaic word *zan* (=kind, species) which occurs here was read apparently by the Greeks as if it were *zu*, ' this.' The phrase means that every kind of corn is stored in the garners.

Oves eorum fœtosæ : *eorum* should be *nostra.* *Fœtosæ* means ' fruitful ' : in the Hebrew we have *ma'ᵃliphoth*, ' bearing a thousand,' ' multiplying by thousands.'

Abundantes in egressibus suis : *egressus* must be rendered ' pastures ' (Heb. *ḥuṣoth*). Corresponding to *abundantes* the Hebrew has *mᵉrubbabhoth*=' bearing myriads,' ' multiplying by tens of thousands.' Thus the Hebrew means literally :

> May our sheep multiply by thousands,
> Yea, by myriads in their pastures !

Cf. Deut. xxviii. 4 ; xxx. 9.

14. *Boves eorum crassæ* : read here also *nostræ.* *Crassæ* may be rendered ' fat ' : the Hebrew word seems, however, rather to mean ' heavily laden ' : possibly the true meaning is ' heavy with young.'

Non est ruina, etc. : this is a difficult passage. The Hebrew means literally : ' There is no breach, and there are no goings-forth, and there is no outcry in our broad places (or streets).' The ' breach ' might be interpreted as a breach made by enemies in the city-walls : the ' goings-forth ' could, then, be understood of companies of captives led away by the enemy, and the ' outcry ' would be that raised by the people when attacked by the enemy (*cf.* Jer. xiv. 2). *Ruina maceriæ* represents *peres*, ' breach ' : *transitus* renders *yoṣe'oth* (' goings-forth '), and *clamor* corresponds to *ṣᵉwaḥah* (outcry). Peters in his commentary (*The Psalms as Liturgies*, p. 484), published in 1922, renders the phrase, ' No breakage, no leakage, no turmoil,' and says : " The meaning of this is very clear, as I write in Jerusalem, where we

have just lived through a period of looting and breakage and turmoil."

15. *Dixerunt,* this is not represented in the Hebrew. The psalmist means that a people which enjoys the blessings just enumerated deserves to be called fortunate. Yahweh is the only source of those blessings and of every blessing which Israel has received or can expect, so that truly indeed that people is fortunate whose God is Yahweh !

PSALM CXLIV

THE GLORY OF YAHWEH'S KINGDOM

THIS psalm, which is called a *T^e^hillah,* or 'Praise-song' of David, is a simple alphabetic acrostic—the first line of each verse commencing with a letter of the alphabet next in order to that with which the preceding verse began. The *nun*-line is wanting in the Massoretic text, but it can be supplied from the Greek, and is represented in the Vulgate.

In the first eight verses the psalmist celebrates the goodness and greatness of God as manifested throughout creation. In verses 9–12 the purpose of this manifestation is explained—that the Kingdom of Yahweh may be glorified. This Kingdom is to last for ever; hence, in verses 13–21, the psalmist voices his confident expectation that the Lord will protect with special kindness those of His loyal worshippers who are, for the moment, in suffering or distress. If God's faithful worshippers were to be for ever forgotten and abandoned, how could God's Kingdom be perpetual?

Verse 13 of this psalm is cited in Aramaic translation in Dan. iii. 100; iv. 31, so that the psalm must be regarded as older, at least, than the Book of Daniel. The attribution of the psalm to David may be due, perhaps, to the extensive use of other psalms which it shows.

1. Laudatio ipsi David.

Exaltabo te Deus meus rex: et benedicam nomini tuo in sæculum, et in sæculum sæculi.
2. Per singulos dies benedicam tibi: et laudabo nomen tuum in sæculum, et in sæculum sæculi.
3. Magnus Dominus et laudabilis nimis: et magnitudinis ejus non est finis.
4. Generatio et generatio laudabit opera tua: et potentiam tuam pronuntiabunt.
5. Magnificentiam gloriæ sanctitatis tuæ loquentur: et mirabilia tua narrabunt.
6. Et virtutem terribilium tuorum dicent: et magnitudinem tuam narrabunt.

1. David's psalm of praise.

I will extol Thee, my God, Thou king,
I will praise Thy name for ever and ever;
2. Daily I will glorify Thee,
And Thy name I will praise evermore.

3. Mighty is the Lord and greatly to be praised,
And there is no limit to His greatness.
4. Age upon age shall praise Thy works,
And Thy power they shall proclaim.

5. The glorious splendour of Thy holiness they shall tell,
And Thy wonders they shall recount;
6. The power of Thy dread deeds they shall relate,
And Thy greatness they shall describe.

7. Memoriam abundantiæ suavitatis tuæ eructabunt: et justitia tua exsultabunt.
8. Miserator et misericors Dominus: patiens, et multum misericors.
9. Suavis Dominus universis: et miserationes ejus super omnia opera ejus.

7. The story of Thy overflowing sweetness they shall publish.
They shall rejoice over Thy just rule.
8. Merciful and gracious is the Lord,
Long-suffering and gracious indeed;
9. Mild is the Lord unto all,
And His pity is poured out on all His works.

10. Confiteantur tibi Domine omnia opera tua: et sancti tui benedicant tibi.
11. Gloriam regni tui dicent: et potentiam tuam loquentur:
12. Ut notam faciant filiis hominum potentiam tuam: et gloriam magnificentiæ regni tui.
13. Regnum tuum regnum omnium sæculorum: et dominatio tua in omni generatione et generationem.

10. Let all Thy works praise Thee, O Lord,
And let Thy faithful ones bless Thee!
11. The glory of Thy kingdom they shall tell;
They shall speak of Thy might,
12. To make known Thy power unto men,
And the glorious splendour of Thy Kingdom:
13. Thy Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom;
And Thy rule endureth for ever.

Fidelis Dominus in omnibus verbis suis: et sanctus in omnibus operibus suis.
14. Allevat Dominus omnes qui corruunt: et erigit omnes elisos.
15. Oculi omnium in te sperant Domine: et tu das escam illorum in tempore opportuno.
16. Aperis tu manum tuam: et imples omne animal benedictione.

The Lord is faithful in all His words,
And holy in all His deeds.
14. The Lord lifteth up all who fall,
And raiseth up all who are bowed down.
15. The eyes of all look for Thee, Lord,
And Thou givest them food in due season:
16. Thou openest Thy hand,
And fillest every being with blessing.

17. Justus Dominus in omnibus viis suis: et sanctus in omnibus operibus suis.
18. Prope est Dominus omnibus invocantibus eum: omnibus invocantibus eum in veritate.
19. Voluntatem timentium se faciet: et deprecationem eorum exaudiet: et salvos faciet eos.
20. Custodit Dominus omnes diligentes se: et omnes peccatores disperdet.
21. Laudationem Domini loquetur os meum: et benedicat omnis caro nomini sancto ejus in sæculum, et in sæculum sæculi.

17. The Lord is just in all His ways;
And holy in all His deeds:
18. The Lord is nigh to those that cry to Him,
To those that cry to Him in truth.
19. He fulfilleth the desire of them that fear Him,
And to their prayer He hearkeneth,
And He saveth them.
20. The Lord guardeth all who love Him:
But all the wicked He destroyeth.
21. My mouth shall proclaim the praise of the Lord,
And all flesh shall bless His holy name
For ever and for ever.

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1. The description of this psalm as a *Tᵉhillah* (oratio) is probably due to the words in verse 21 below: 'My mouth shall speak a *tᵉhillah* (*laudatio*) of Yahweh.'

Deus meus rex: this is an unusual form of invocation. The psalmist does not say 'my King,' but 'King' simply, for Yahweh is universal King. As long as the psalmist (who speaks here for Israel) lives, he will praise the universal King.

3. *Cf.* Ps. xlvii. 2.

4. An imitation, apparently, of Ps. xviii. 3. Each generation will hand on to the next the story of God's might and goodness.

5. *Magnificentiam gloriæ sanctitatis tuæ*: the Hebrew means: 'the glorious splendour of Thy Majesty': 'splendour,' 'glory' and 'majesty' belong peculiarly to Yahweh.

Loquentur: the Vulgate rendering implies here a better Hebrew text than that handed down by the Massoretes.

Narrabunt: this ought to be, according to the Hebrew, *meditabor*.

6. The *terribilia* are the deeds which Yahweh has wrought against His adversaries.

Dicent . . . narrabunt: Hebrew, '*They* will tell . . . *I* will recount.' The change of person reminds us that the psalmist regards himself as one in a long succession of singers that praise the Lord.

7. *Suavitas*: 'goodness.'

Eructabunt: *cf.* Ps. xviii. 3; xliv. 2; cxviii. 171; cxliii. 13. The psalmist means that each future generation in turn will burst forth into songs of praise to the goodness of God.

8. *Cf.* Exod. xxxiv. 6; Ps. lxxxv. 15; cii. 8.

9. *Universis*: not only to Israel, but to all the world.

12. *Et gloriam magnificentiæ*: in verse 5 we had 'the splendour of the glory'; here we have the 'glory of the splendour.' Instead of 'Thy Kingdom' the Hebrew has 'His Kingdom.'

13. This verse appears in Aramaic in Dan. iii. 100; iv. 31.

With *Fidelis* begins the *nun*-verse which is wanting in the Massoretic text. Jerome in his version gives the *nun*-verse in the same form in which it appears in the Vulgate.

Qui corruunt: those who are on the point of falling. Jerome renders here:

> *Sustentat Dominus omnes corruentes,*
> *et erigit omnes jacentes.*

16, 17. A borrowing from Ps. ciii. 28–29.

The 'ways' of the Lord are the methods of His rule. *Sanctus* represents here the Hebrew *ḥasidh*—one who shows *ḥesedh*, 'loving-kindness' (in the Vulgate, usually, *misericordia*).

18. Those who invoke the Lord 'in truth' are they whose sentiments are in conformity with their prayers.

19. *Voluntas*, 'the desire.'

21. *Laudationem Domini*: Hebrew, 'the song-of-praise (*tᵉhillah*) of Yahweh.'

PSALM CXLV

IN THE LORD ALONE WE MUST TRUST!

IN Yahweh alone can Israel trust! This is the theme of the psalm. In the first part of the poem (verses 1–6) the psalmist contrasts the might of Yahweh with the weakness and helplessness of men. It is useless to trust in even the most powerful of men, for their lives are uncertain and brief, and on the day of their death their plans come to nought. Israel should, therefore, put no trust in alliances with foreign princes: in Yahweh alone, the God of Jacob, the God of the Covenant, the Creator of heaven and earth, should the hopes of Israel be set.

The second part of the psalm (verses 7–9) celebrates the faithfulness of the Lord to His promises. He has ever acted as the God who made the Covenant with Israel. He has protected and guided His people in all their history. He has defended them against oppression; He has delivered them from bondage; He has given them food when they were hungry, and instruction when they were in need thereof: He has ever uplifted the weak and lowly and has guarded the Israelite Exiles, and provided for the widows and orphans of His people. Not only has God the power, then, to protect His people, but He has at all times used that power and thus fulfilled His Covenant with Israel. In Him, therefore, and not in foreign princes, should Israel trust.

In the concluding verse the psalmist declares that Yahweh, in contrast with human rulers, is a King for ever. He is Israel's God, the God of Sion, who reigns throughout the ages. In her God, then, let Israel trust!

This psalm is the first psalm of the so-called 'Little Hallel' (which includes the last six psalms of the Vulgate Psalter). It is not possible to determine precisely the date or occasion of this psalm. The presence of many echoes of other psalms suggests a post-Exilic date, and the peculiar insistence of the psalmist on the futility of reliance on human help seems to imply some recent political event as the occasion of the psalm. The reference in the Greek (=Vulgate) title to the prophets Aggaeus and Zachary implies a tradition that the psalm was composed in the early post-Exilic period.

1. Alleluia, Aggæi, et Zachariæ.

1. Alleluia: by Aggæus and Zachary.

2. Lauda anima mea Dominum: laudabo Dominum in vita mea: psallam Deo meo quamdiu fuero.

2. Praise thou the Lord, O my soul!
I will praise the Lord my life long,
I will hymn to my God while I live.

Nolite confidere in principibus :

3. In filiis hominum, in quibus non est salus.
4. Exibit spiritus ejus, et revertetur in terram suam : in illa die peribunt omnes cogitationes eorum.

5. Beatus, cujus Deus Jacob adjutor ejus, spes ejus in Domino Deo ipsius :
6. Qui fecit cœlum et terram, mare, et omnia, quæ in eis sunt.

7. Qui custodit veritatem in sæculum, facit judicium injuriam patientibus : dat escam esurientibus.

Dominus solvit compeditos:
8. Dominus illuminat cæcos.
Dominus erigit elisos, Dominus diligit justos.

9. Dominus custodit advenas, pupillum et viduam suscipiet : et vias peccatorum disperdet.

10. Regnabit Dominus in sæcula : Deus tuus Sion, in generationem et generationem.

Trust ye not in princes,

3. In men with whom there is no help ;

4. When his life-breath goes forth,
He sinks back to his clay ;
On that day all his plans come to nought.

5. Happy is he whose Helper is the God of Jacob,
Whose hope is in Yahweh, his God,
6. Who hath made heaven and earth and the sea,
And all that is therein,
7. Who keepeth forever His truth,
Who procureth justice for the oppressed,
And giveth food to the hungry.

The Lord releaseth captives ;
8. The Lord giveth sight to the blind :
The Lord raiseth up those that are bowed down ;
The Lord loveth the righteous ;
9. The Lord protecteth strangers ;
He guardeth the orphan and widow ;
But the paths of sinners He bringeth to nought.

10. The Lord reigneth as King for ever,
Thy God, O Sion, from age to age !

---

1. *Alleluia* appears in the Hebrew as a title.

Aggæi et Zachariæ : this psalm and the following are connected in the Septuagint with the names of Aggaeus and Zachary. There is no intrinsic improbability in such a connection, for the psalm contains nothing which would exclude a very early post-Exilic origin.

The address to the psalmist's own soul reminds us of Ps. cii. 1 and ciii. 1, 33.

Nolite confidere in principibus : this is the negative side of the psalmist's theme. The warning against trust in princes is, perhaps, an echo of Ps. cxvii. 8, 9. There may be a reference here to some alliance or co-operation with a heathen power which has turned out disastrously for Israel.

3. *In filiis hominum* : in mere men. Mere men are helpless allies, because there is no *t^e^shu'ah* (' help,' ' rescue,' *salus*) to be had from them : *Domini est salus*—as Ps. iii. 9 expresses it.

4. The *ejus* refers to ' man ' in general : when his breath of life

(*spiritus*) goes forth he returns to 'his clay' (*in terram suam*)—to the clay from which he was formed: *cf.* Ps. ciii. 29; Gen. iii. 19. When the spirit goes forth, and a man returns to his clay, all his plannings come to nought. Note the use of this verse in 1 Mac. ii. 63. The change of pronominal endings which gives us *ejus* and *eorum* is due to the fact that the psalmist is concerned with humanity in general.

5, 6. If it is foolish to trust in men, it is, on the contrary, most wise and prudent to trust in the Lord. Fortunate, therefore, is he who puts his trust in the God of Jacob, the omnipotent Creator of heaven and earth! *Cf.* Ps. xxxii. 12; cxliii. 15. The redundant construction *cujus . . . ejus* is a Hebraism.

7. The Lord is as faithful as He is powerful, and it is, therefore, right to trust Him unreservedly. The faithfulness of Yahweh to His promises appears in His watchful protection of His people, particularly at times when their political strength was insignificant. Human allies are most loyal when least needed; but the Lord is above all a Protector of the oppressed and the needy.

Dominus solvit compeditos: note how in this and the following four clauses the name 'Yahweh' is put at the beginning: the psalmist wishes thus to emphasise the contrast between Yahweh and the 'princes.' The connection of the *compediti* with the *caeci* is based on Is. xlii. 7 (*cf.* Is. xxxv. 5; xxix. 18; xlii. 16, 18, 19; xliii. 8). The making of the blind to see is probably to be understood of the illumination of their mind by the Law. The Septuagint renders: 'The Lord maketh wise the blind.' With *erigit elisos*, *cf.* Ps. cxliv. 14. It will be remembered that Is. xlii. 7*ff*. is a forecast of the activity of the *Servus Domini*, and that the work which is there assigned to the *Servus Domini* is claimed by Our Lord to have been accomplished by Himself. See Our Lord's answer to the emissaries of the Baptist, Matt. xi. 2–6.

9. *Advenae*: this renders the Hebrew *gerim*, which is often incorrectly explained here as='proselytes': *gerim*=primarily, strangers living among the Jews. It is possible that when the psalmist speaks of Yahweh's care for *gerim*, he is thinking not merely of the Lord's care for the unprotected heathen who sojourned among the Israelites, but also of the protection which the Lord so lavishly bestowed on the Jewish Exiles in Babylon, the Exiles were *gerim* in Babylon.

Disperdet: the Hebrew verb corresponding means 'to confuse,' 'to lead astray.' The Lord will turn aside the godless from the path of worldly success which they have chosen, and set them on a path which leads to confusion.

10. Unlike the princes of earth Yahweh is an eternal King: His life-breath does not go forth: His projects abide. Surely Sion will trust in her own eternal King!

PSALM CXLVI

A SONG OF THANKSGIVING

A SONG of praise is due to the Lord, for He is building up Jerusalem and bringing home its exiled children. He is giving courage again to those whose hearts had been well-nigh broken in the Exile, and He is healing all the wounds of their sorrows. The might and wisdom of Yahweh know no limits, and He can, therefore, raise up His people once more unto power, and overthrow their foes (verses 1–6). Let Israel, therefore, sing songs of praise and thanks to her mighty God, to the God who commands the rain and the clouds, and provides food for all creatures (7–9).

The Lord has no delight in those who rely on their own strength, as the steed relies on its might, or the warrior on his fleetness (*cf.* Ps. xix. 8; xxxii. 16*ff.*). The pleasure of Yahweh is in those that depend upon Him, and trust Him unreservedly. Humbled, then, and lowly though Israel for the moment is, she may confidently hope, through unwavering trust in Yahweh, to be re-established in her ancient greatness.

In the Hebrew text this psalm and the next following Vulgate Psalm go together to form a single poem, so that the Hebrew Psalm cxlviii is the same as Ps. cxlviii of the Vulgate. The separation of the text into two psalms—as in the Greek and Vulgate—is quite justifiable, for the Vulgate Psalm cxlvii presents a sufficiently rounded-off completeness of thought to stand by itself as a distinct poem. It would be possible, indeed, perhaps, to regard Ps. cxlvi (Vulgate) as itself consisting of two Psalms, verses 1–6 and verses 7–11, so that we might, if we wished, regard the Vulgate Psalms cxlvi–cxlvii as consisting of *three* songs of praise of Yahweh with the same theme—the might of God, as shown in nature and history, and His great mercies towards Israel. In a commentary on the Vulgate Psalter, however, it is most natural to take the Vulgate text as it stands, and to treat the Vulgate Psalm cxlvi by itself as a independent whole.

1. Alleluia.

Laudate Dominum quoniam bonus est psalmus: Deo nostro sit jucunda, decoraque laudatio.

2. Ædificans Jerusalem Dominus: dispersiones Israelis congregabit.

1. Alleluia.

Praise ye the Lord, for the praise-song is good;
Praise sweet and beautiful beseemeth our God.

2. 'Tis the Lord that rebuildeth Jerusalem,
And gathereth home the exiles of Israel;

3. Qui sanat contritos corde : et alligat contritiones eorum.
4. Qui numerat multitudinem stellarum : et omnibus eis nomina vocat.
5. Magnus Dominus noster, et magna virtus ejus : et sapientiæ ejus non est numerus.
6. Suscipiens mansuetos Dominus : humilians autem peccatores usque ad terram.

3. 'Tis He that cureth the heart-broken,
And bindeth up their wounds ;
4. 'Tis He that fixeth the number of the stars,
And calleth them all by name.
5. Great is the Lord and mighty is His strength,
To His wisdom there is no limit.
6. The Lord raiseth up the lowly ;
But sinners He humbleth to the dust.

7. Præcinite Domino in confessione : psallite Deo nostro in cithara.
8. Qui operit cœlum nubibus : et parat terræ pluviam.
Qui producit in montibus fœnum : et herbam servituti hominum.
9. Qui dat jumentis escam ipsorum : et pullis corvorum invocantibus eum.

7. Sing to the Lord a thanksgiving-song :
Sing to our God with the zither !
8. He covereth the heavens with clouds,
And prepareth rain for the earth.
He maketh the grass to sprout on the hills,
And herbage for the servants of men.
9. He giveth to the cattle their food,
And to the young ravens that cry to Him.

10. Non in fortitudine equi voluntatem habebit : nec in tibiis viri beneplacitum erit ei.
11. Beneplacitum est Domino super timentes eum : et in eis, qui sperant super misericordia ejus.

10. Not in the strength of the steed hath He joy,
Nor pleasure in the warrior's fleetness :
11. The pleasure of the Lord is in them that fear Him,
And in them that trust in His kindness.

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1. *Alleluia* : the corresponding *hal^e^lu-Yah* of the Massoretic text belongs to the end of the preceding Psalm. In the Septuagint we have here again in the title the names of Aggæus and Zachary.

Laudate : this renders the Hebrew *hal^e^lu-Yah,* which is here not a rubric, but a part of the text.

Bonus est psalmus : it is a pleasing duty to praise the Lord. The Vulgate differs here somewhat from the Hebrew. The latter has :

> ' For it is good to hymn our God,
> Yea, it is pleasant :
> A song of praise is becoming.'

Psalmus implies a Hebrew original *zimrah,* whereas the Massoretic text has *zamm^e^rah,* ' singing ' (infinitive Piel). Arranging the words of the Vulgate after the Hebrew, we should get, approximately :

> *Laudate Dominum,*
> *quoniam bonum est, et jucundum, psallere Deo nostro :*
> *Laudatio decet.*

2. The rebuilding of Jerusalem is here (as in Ps. cxlvii) the first favour for which Yahweh is to be praised and thanked. *Aedificans* suggests correctly the meaning of the Hebrew ; the sense is not that Yahweh *has built* or *will build,* but that He *is now rebuilding* : the

restoration of Jerusalem is in progress. *Dispersiones Israelis congregabit*: Yahweh is still gathering together in Jerusalem the Israelites that had been scattered among the Gentiles. Compare, for the phrase, Is. lvi. 8.

3. This is a borrowing from Is. lxi. 1. During the Babylonian Exile the Exiles were heart-broken from grief and home-sickness.

4. It is because Yahweh is the mighty God who has created and completely controls the universe, that he can bind up broken hearts. This verse is an echo of Is. xl. 26:

Levate in excelsum oculos vestros,
Et videte quis creavit haec,
Qui educit in numero militiam eorum,
Et omnes ex nomine vocat.

The Hebrew *moneh*, here rendered *qui numerat* probably means, 'who determines the number,' rather than 'who reckons.' The Lord fixes the number of the stars which make up the 'host of heaven,' and when He calls out the name of a star in His great roll-call, the star so summoned comes forward, or appears. It is implied here that each of the stars has its name, which is known to God.

5. Compare Is. xl. 26, 28. *Numerus*='limit.' The wisdom of God is infinite.

6. The wisdom of the Lord appears particularly in His methods of dealing with the oppressed. The psalmist probably means by the *mansueti*, Israel, and by the 'sinners,' the foreign oppressors of Israel.

7. Here begins a new summons to the praise of Yahweh: praise is due to the Lord for His mercy in sending rain in due time, and plentiful seasons.

8. Compare Ps. ciii. 13–14. The phrase *Et herbam servituti hominum* is from Ps. ciii. 14, but it is absent here from the Massoretic text. See the note on *servitus* in Ps. ciii. 14: the reference is to the dumb servitors of men, the domestic animals.

9. Compare Job xxxviii. 41:

Who provideth the raven his fare,
And who bringeth him prey;
When his young ones cry to 'El,
And scream for want of food?—(Ball's *Commentary*).

Compare Luke xii. 24: *Considerate corvos quia non seminant, neque metunt, quibus non est cellarium, neque horreum, et Deus pascit illos.*

The young ravens are left at a very early age to fend for themselves, and require, therefore, special protection from the Lord.

10. It has just been said (verse 9) that Yahweh graciously protects even the weakest beings when they turn to Him for help: here, on the other hand, it is asserted that those beings that trust for security to their own strength, receive no help from the Lord. As specimens of such foolishly self-confident creatures the psalmist mentions the

steed that trusts in his strength, and the warrior that trusts in his fleetness. The fleetness (hence the *tibiæ*) of the warrior was an asset of the highest value in ancient warfare. For the thought of this verse compare Ps. xix. 8 ; xxxii. 16, 17.

12. The pleasure of Yahweh is not in the physical beauty or prowess of men, but in the humble confidence with which they turn to Him. We can feel from this verse how immense is the contrast between the religious outlook of Israel and that of the ancient pagan world.

PSALM CXLVII

WINTER IS PAST!

THIS psalm begins, like the preceding, with a reference to the re-establishment of Jerusalem. The gates of the city have been restored, and peace has been established on the borders of Israel. There is abundance of bread in the land. This has been brought about by Yahweh, and to Yahweh, therefore, is due the heartfelt thanks of the people (verses 1–3). The psalm goes on to describe the might of Yahweh's Word over nature. The power of that Word to evoke the rigours of a fearful winter, and to dissolve the winter into a genial spring, is particularly considered. It sends down the fleecy snow-flakes, and covers all the earth with hoar-frost: it flings over the lakes and rivers great masses of ice, as if they were but tiny fragments: it overwhelms the most powerful waters, binding them in fetters of frost. But, just as Yahweh with His word can call forth the snows and frosts and ice of winter, so can He also with a Word make the winter to vanish. At His word the breezes of spring begin to blow—making the ice to melt, and the waters to trickle (verses 4–7). All this may refer to an unusually severe winter which Jerusalem has just experienced, or the psalmist may be thinking chiefly of the might of that command of Yahweh which has changed the winter of Israel's discontent of Exile into a spring of hope and promise in the now re-established Jerusalem.

In the two last verses the psalmist proudly recalls the privilege which Israel enjoys in contrast with the heathen peoples: to her alone have been given the Law and the promises. For this, then, let Israel give thanks!

Alleluia.	Alleluia.
1. Lauda Jerusalem Dominum: lauda Deum tuum Sion.	1. Praise thou the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise thou thy God, O Sion!
2. Quoniam confortavit seras portarum tuarum: benedixit filiis tuis in te.	2. For He hath made firm the bolts of thy doors: He hath blessed thy children within thee.
3. Qui posuit fines tuos pacem: et adipe frumenti satiat te.	3. He hath established peace on thy borders: With the marrow of wheat, He hath sated thee.
4. Qui emittit eloquium suum terræ: velociter currit sermo ejus.	4. Earthwards He sendeth His Word; His command swiftly hasteneth.

5. Qui dat nivem sicut lanam: nebulam sicut cinerem spargit.
6. Mittit crystallum suam sicut buccellas: ante faciem frigoris ejus quis sustinebit?
7. Emittet verbum suum, et liquefaciet ea: flabit spiritus ejus, et fluent aquæ.

8. Qui annuntiat verbum suum Jacob: justitias, et judicia sua Israel.
9. Non fecit taliter omni nationi: et judicia sua non manifestavit eis.
Alleluia.

5. Snow-flakes He giveth like wool;
Hoar-frost He streweth like ashes.
6. He sendeth down His ice as fragments;
Who can endure His frost?

7. He sendeth forth His word—and it thaweth them:
His wind bloweth,—and the waters flow:
8. He hath given His word unto Jacob,
His Law and His Judgments to Israel.

9. He hath not done thus to every people,
Nor hath He proclaimed to them His Law.
Alleluia!

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1. *Alleluia*: as this psalm appears in the Hebrew as a continuation of the preceding psalm, there is nothing in the Hebrew corresponding to this *Alleluia*.

2. In the strengthening of the bolts commentators have seen a reference to the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem by Nehemias: see Nehem. iii. 12, *27ff*.

Filiis tuis: thy inhabitants.

3. *Qui posuit fines . . . pacem*: 'to make the borders peace'= to establish peace on the borders, *i.e.*, to remove all threat of war from outside against Israel. The psalmist may have here in view the thoughts of Is. lx. *17f.*:

> I will make thy officers peace,
> And thy rulers righteousness,
> Violence shall no more be heard in thy land,
> Nor destruction in thy borders;
> Thou shalt call thy walls salvation,
> And thy gates 'Praise.'

Adipe frumenti: the 'fat of the wheat' means the choicest wheat. *Cf.* Ps. lxxx. 17; Deut. xxxii. 14.

4. God's Word is described here (as frequently elsewhere) as creatively active. God sends it as a swift messenger to the earth, and speedily it accomplishes His behest (*cf.* Is. ix. 8). In the verses that follow the psalmist gives examples of the effects which the Word can produce. Theodoret suggests that in verses 5–7 the psalmist's purpose is to show what various forms the one element—water—can be made to assume by the energising Word of Yahweh. Many commentators think that the winter-picture which follows was inspired by a phenomenally severe winter which Jerusalem has just experienced: a much talked of winter and its sudden disappearance would serve as a striking instance of Yahweh's power over nature. Since, however, the psalm begins with a reference to the restoration of Jerusalem it may be that the psalmist has in view in his description of a bitter winter, summoned forth and dismissed by the Word of the

Lord, the change of Israel's winter of sorrow in the Exile into the spring of hope which the Return from Exile and the re-building of the Temple and the city have begun. As verse 3 is probably in some way an echo of Is. lx. 17*f.*, so, possibly, we should see in this verse the influence of Is. lv. 10–11—where the creative power of God's word is also described in connection with the phenomena of snow and rain.

5. *Sicut lanam*: the whiteness and the flakes supply the point of comparison. Commentators have generally noticed here the parallel in Martial, Epigrams iv. 3:

> *Aspice quam densum tacitarum vellus aquarum*
> *Defluat.*
> 'See what a thick fleece of silent waters falls.'

Nebulam: the Hebrew, *k^e^phor*, means 'hoar-frost,' not 'fog.' When roofs and trees and fields are covered with hoar-frost, they appear sometimes as if strewn with ashes. Jerome has here, *Pruinas quasi cinerem spargit.* Bellarmine has the following note on the Vulgate rendering: *Siquidem quando densa pruina decidit, nebulosum sive caliginosum aerem reddit, et ipsa pruina ex caliginoso vapore concrescit. Porro comparatio pruinae cum cinere ad densitatem pruinae pertinet. Itaque sensus est: tanta densitate pruinam caliginosam sive nebulam ex pruina diffundit ut cinerem spargere videatur.*

Compare the passage Eccli. 16*b*–20 (according to the Oxford Apocrypha):

> The terror of Him stirreth up the south wind,
> The whirlwind of the north, hurricane and tempest;
> Like flocks of birds He sheddeth abroad His snow,
> And like settling locusts is the fall thereof.
> The beauty of the whiteness dazzleth the eyes,
> And the heart marvelleth at the raining thereof.
> The hoar-frost also He poureth out like salt,
> And maketh the crystals sparkle like sapphire.
> The icy blast of the north He causeth to blow,
> And hardeneth the pond like a bottle.
> On every basin of water He spreadeth a crust,
> And the pond putteth on, as it were, a breastplate.

6. *Crystallum . . . buccellas*: this is frequently explained as meaning that God sends hail from heaven as if it were ice (*crystallum*) broken into fragments (*buccellas*='mouthfuls'). It is more likely, however, that the sense is: Yahweh (or His Word) flings into their place the great masses of ice which cover the lakes and rivers, when

> 'Like stone the waters stiffen,
> And the face of the Deep groweth solid'
> —(Job xxxviii. 30, according to Ball's rendering).

with the same ease as if those mighty masses were but tiny fragments. The second half of this verse and the next verse seem to imply that the reference is in 6*a* not to hail, but to the ice-covering of lakes and rivers.

Ante frigorem ejus quis sustinebit: the thought is not that the winter is more severe than men can endure, but that even the apparently irresistible might of great rivers is compelled by the tremendous force of Yahweh's frost to lapse into immobility and silence.

7. Yahweh's Word has, without effort, called the forces of winter into being: with equal ease the same Word can make the winter to vanish. *Ea* includes the snow, hoar-frost, and ice. The *spiritus* is the wind which begins the thaw.

8. The Word that works so mightily in nature has also been active for Israel in revelation. Verses 8 and 9 are largely a reproduction of Deut. iv. 7–8.

9. The Law of Israel is no human product: it has been given directly by God to Israel. Therein lies the ground of Israel's superiority to the heathens. For this great privilege of a directly communicated Word of Yahweh let Israel praise the Lord!

*

PSALM CXLVIII

PRAISE YE THE LORD!

THE psalmist summons all creation to praise the Lord of heaven. In the first part (verses 1–6) the heavenly beings and bodies, the Angels, the hosts of heaven, the sun, moon, stars, the heavens themselves and the waters above the heavens, are called on to join in a chorus of praise in honour of Yahweh, their Creator, who has given them the law of their being.

In the second part (verses 7–12) the creatures of earth and the Deep—the monsters of the Deep, the great Deep itself, fire, hail, snow, ice, storm-wind, the hills and mountains, the fruit-trees and cedars, beasts wild and tame, creeping and winged beings, kings of the heathen and rulers of every kind, youths and maidens, old and young—are summoned to join with the chorus of heaven in singing the Creator's praise.

In verses 13*b* and 14 the chief reason for the praising-song of Creation is announced: it is the 'raising up of a horn' for Israel which Yahweh has graciously accomplished. The safety and the glory of Israel are presented, therefore, as a matter of interest for the whole universe.

The 'raising up of a horn' has been interpreted by some as the bringing home of the Exiles from Babylon: by others it has been understood prophetically of the inauguration of the Messianic glories. The bold universalism of the psalm—its summons to all nature and all men to rejoice over the glory of Israel—shows a distinctly Messianic tendency. A striking proof, however, of God's mercy towards Israel, like the deliverance from the Exile, would be naturally regarded by the psalmist either as a token of the near approach of, or as, in some sense, the actual inauguration of, the Messianic period. Thus this psalm, while essentially Messianic in imagery and outlook, may have been immediately occasioned by the return from the Exile, or some other concrete event in the history of Israel.

The *Benedicite* is obviously modelled on Ps. cxlviii. The 14th verse of this psalm is quoted in the Hebrew Psalm in Eccles. li. 12, xv–xvi.

1. Alleluia.	1. Alleluia.
Laudate Dominum de cœlis: laudate eum in excelsis.	Praise the Lord from heaven! Praise Him on high!

2. Laudate eum omnes Angeli ejus: laudate eum omnes virtutes ejus.
3. Laudate eum sol et luna: laudate eum omnes stellæ, et lumen.
4. Laudate eum cœli cœlorum: et aquæ omnes, quæ super cœlos sunt,
5. Laudent nomen Domini.
Quia ipse dixit, et facta sunt: ipse mandavit, et creata sunt.
6. Statuit ea in æternum, et in sæculum sæculi: præceptum posuit, et non præteribit.

2. Praise Him all ye His angels;
Praise Him all ye His hosts!

3. Praise Him O sun and moon;
Praise Him every star and light;

4. Praise Him ye highest heavens!
And ye waters all above the heavens!

5. Let them praise the Lord;
For He spake and they became;
He commanded and they were created.
6. He gave them fixed order for ever;
He set up a law which passeth not away.

7. Laudate Dominum de terra, dracones, et omnes abyssi.
8. Ignis, grando, nix, glacies, spiritus procellarum: quæ faciunt verbum ejus:
9. Montes, et omnes colles: ligna fructifera, et omnes cedri.
10. Bestiæ, et universa pecora: serpentes, et volucres pennatæ:
11. Reges terræ, et omnes populi: principes, et omnes judices terræ.
12. Juvenes, et virgines: senes cum junioribus laudent nomen Domini:
13. Quia exaltatum est nomen ejus solius.
14. Confessio ejus super cœlum, et terram: et exaltavit cornu populi sui.
Hymnus omnibus sanctis ejus: filiis Israel, populo appropinquanti sibi.

7. Praise the Lord from the earth,
Ye monsters and all the deeps,
8. Fire, hail, snow, ice,
Storm-winds that execute His word!

9. Mountains and all ye hills,
Fruit-trees and cedars all!
10. Wild beasts and all cattle,
Creeping things and winged birds,

11. Kings of earth and all ye peoples,
Princes and all ye judges of the earth,
12. Youths and maidens,
Old men and children,
Let them praise the name of the Lord,
13. For His name alone is exalted;

14. His praise is over heaven and earth.
He hath raised up a horn for His people,

'Tis a theme of praise for all His saints,
For the children of Israel,
The people that draweth nigh to Him.
Alleluia!

---

1. *Alleluia*: the Septuagint adds here as title Ἀγγαίου καὶ Ζαχαρίου. This implies an old tradition that the return from Exile was the immediate occasion of the psalm.

De cœlis: as in the *de terra* of verse 7, the source of the chorus is here indicated. Verses 2–4 name the members of the heavenly choir.

2. *Virtutes*: Hebrew, 'the battle-hosts': the psalmist regards the Angels (not the stars, which are mentioned in verse 3) as the 'battle-hosts' of Yahweh. *Cf.* Jos. v. 14, 15; 3 Kings xxii. 19. We have here echoes of Ps. cii. 21.

3. *Stellæ et lumen*: the Hebrew has 'stars of light', *i.e.*, stars which consist of light.

4. *Cœli cœlorum*: the highest heaven: *cf.* Deut. x. 14; 3 Kings viii. 27; 2 Chron. ii. 5, 6. The waters above the heavens are the waters above the firmament of Gen. i. 7.

5. The immediate ground of their duty to praise is the fact of their creation by God: the further ground (mentioned below in verses 13–14) is the safety of Israel. The words *Ipse dixit et facta sunt*, which are not represented in the Massoretic text, are taken from Ps. xxxii. 9.

6. *Præceptum posuit et non præteribit*: He established an immutable law. It is suggested that the Massoretic text should be slightly emended so as to give the sense: 'He gave a law which they may not transgress'—*i.e.*, the heavens and the dwellers thereof may not transgress the laws which Yahweh has imposed upon them—the laws, that is, probably, of their movements. The psalmist may intend to make a contrast here between the heavenly powers and bodies, with their immutable laws, and the caprice and freedom of the earthly beings who are about to be addressed.

7. For *de terra* see above on verse 1.

Dracones et omnes abyssi: the *dracones* are the *tanninim*, the sea-monsters of Gen. i. 21, and the 'deeps' are the *t^ehom* of Gen. i. 6.

8. The Hebrew has here, 'fire, hail, snow, smoke, and storm-wind.' The 'smoke' (*ḳitor*: see Ps. cxviii. 83 where the same Hebrew word is rendered *pruina*) has become *glacies* (as also in Jerome's own version). For the 'storm-wind' see Ps. ciii. 4.

9. The poet here addresses the dry land as contrasted with the Deep (verse 7) and with the air (verse 8).

10. The *bestiæ* are the wild beasts; the *pecora* the domestic animals. With the list of creatures here given compare Gen. i. 24*f*.

11, 12. The psalmist distinguishes mortals according to occupation, sex, and age.

13. The first motive alleged for the praising of Yahweh is the glorious manifestation of Himself which Yahweh has given in nature: His majesty covers heaven and earth (*cf.* Ps. cxii. 4; viii. 1). Thus the two worlds of heaven and earth, which have hitherto been held apart in the psalm, are now brought together. This indicates the studied art of the poet.

14. The chief motive for the praise-song of the universal chorus is the exaltation of Israel: Yahweh has raised up or (taking the text prophetically) will raise up a horn for Israel. The people of Israel were grievously oppressed and humbled: now they are raised up again by Yahweh. This restoration of Israel is, the psalmist declares, a *hymnus* (*t^ehillah*), a theme of thanksgiving, for all servants of the Lord.

Filiis Israel, populo appropinquanti sibi: the *filii Israel*=the *sancti*. Instead of *populo appropinquanti sibi* we can get, by a very

slight emendation of the Hebrew (reading *ḳ^erobhau* instead of *ḳ^erobho*) the better sense, *populo appropinquantium ei*: *Cf.* Deut. iv. 7; Ephes. ii. 17.

For the 'raising up of a horn' compare Ps. cxxxi. 17; Eccli. li. 12; 1 Kings ii. 1.

PSALM CXLIX

ISRAEL'S VICTORY OVER THE HEATHENS

THE psalmist summons the people, who are assembled at a thanksgiving festival, to sing a new song of praise and thanks to the Creator and King of Israel. Let the people honour the name of Yahweh with song, and music, and sacred dance (verses 1–3). Thanksgiving and praise are due because the Lord has granted to His worshippers victory and glory. Long had they patiently endured humiliation and suffering, but now at last, the Lord has given them victory over their foes. Therefore let the loyal subjects of Yahweh rejoice ; but while they sing their songs of praise and gladness, let them not forget to keep close at hand the sword which Yahweh has graced with victory (4–6). That sword they will need still further to execute vengeance on the heathen, who have so long oppressed the people of God. The kings and nobles who oppose the Kingdom of Yahweh will be overthrown, and their overthrow will be a theme of Israel's proudest songs.

In this psalm, then, as in so many others, the victories of Israel over its heathen adversaries are regarded either as foreshadowing the triumphs of the Messias over his foes, or as themselves constituting a stage in the actual ushering in of the Messianic Kingdom. In the preceding psalm the heathen princes were invited to join with all creation in a song of thanksgiving for Israel's exaltation : here, on the other hand, the heathen rulers are depicted as defeated by the sword of Israel's vengeance. They are no longer invited to join in the general chorus of thanksgiving for Israel's success, but rather, as defeated and befettered foes they are compelled to serve as mute tokens of the might of Israel's God.

This psalm is assigned by some recent critics to the Maccabean period, but the arguments advanced for this view are not convincing. A more likely theory assigns the psalm to the period of restoration under Nehemias. *Cf.* Nehem. iv. 10*ff.* with verse 6 of the psalm ; but see also 2 Macc. xv. 17.

1. Alleluia.

Cantate Domino canticum novum : laus ejus in ecclesia sanctorum.

2. Lætetur Israel in eo, qui fecit eum : et filii Sion exsultent in rege suo.

1. Alleluia.

Sing to the Lord a new song ;
Let His praise resound where the faithful are gathered !

2. Let Israel rejoice in Him who made her,
Let the children of Sion exult in their King !

3. Laudent nomen ejus in choro : in tympano, et psalterio psallant ei :

3. Let them praise His name in the dance :
Let them sing to Him with timbrel and zither !

4. Quia beneplacitum est Domino in populo suo : et exaltabit mansuetos in salutem.

4. For the Lord delighteth in His people :
He raiseth up the lowly to victory.

5. Exsultabunt sancti in gloria : lætabuntur in cubilibus suis.

5. The pious rejoice with praising song :
They exult on their couches.

6. Exaltationes Dei in gutture eorum : et gladii ancipites in manibus eorum :

6. The praise of God is in their mouth :
And two-edged swords are in their hands.

7. Ad faciendam vindictam in nationibus : increpationes in populis.

7. To take vengeance on the heathens,
To execute chastisement on the peoples,

8. Ad alligandos reges eorum in compedibus : et nobiles eorum in manicis ferreis.

8. To bind their kings with chains,
And their nobles with iron fetters ;

9. Ut faciant in eis judicium conscriptum : gloria hæc est omnibus sanctis ejus.
Alleluia.

9. To execute on them the doom that is written ;
That is a glory for all His saints.
Alleluia !

---

1. For the 'new song' compare Ps. xcv. 1 ; xcvii. 1 ; cxliii. 9 ; xxxii. 3. The song must be new, for no existing song is grand enough for the occasion.

In the Vulgate we must supply a verb with *laus ejus*—'Let the song of His praise resound' : in the Hebrew *t^ehillatho*, 'His praise-song' may be regarded as second accusative governed by 'sing.' The *ecclesia sanctorum* is the sacred assembly of Israel—*i.e.*, the people gathered together for public worship.

2. *In eo qui fecit eum* : the Hebrew has *b^e'osau*=in those who made him : the plural, however, is nothing more than a reflection of the plural word *'Elohim*. Note that Yahweh is spoken of as the Creator of Israel and the King of Sion. *Cf.* 1 Kings xii. 12 ; Zach. ix. 9 ; Ps. xcii. 1.

3. *In choro* : with sacred dance : *cf.* Exod. xv. 20 ; Jud. xi. 34 ; Jer. xxxi. 4 ; Ps. cxvii. 27. The timbrel (*toph*) is mentioned in Exod. xv in connection with Miryam's Song of Victory.

4. The proof of the Lord's favour and good pleasure is that He has given His people victory.

Et exaltabit mansuetos : the Hebrew means : 'He adorns the patient ones with victory' : the Massoretic *'^anawim* (here rendered *mansueti*) are the Israelites who have so long endured humiliation and suffering. The phrase, 'adorn with victory,' seems to suggest the thought that Yahweh has taken away their garments of mourning, and replaced them by the splendid robes of victory.

5. *Gloria* : this does not mean here the honour which the Lord

has granted to the *sancti*; it is rather the praise-song which the *sancti* (who are identical with the *mansueti*) will sing because of the favours of Yahweh.

In cubilibus suis: the reference to couches implies the rest which is due to the Israelite warriors of the Lord after their victory. Or, it may be, as some commentators think, that the *cubilia* are mentioned to recall the contrast between the time when the Israelites spent sleepless nights in thinking of their misery, and the joyful present when all their waking hours are full of gladness, and their nights are spent in peaceful repose.

6. This verse recalls both Neh. iv. 10 and 2 Macc. xv. 27.

7. *Increpationes*: the Hebrew *tokhehoth* means here more than 'chidings': it may be taken as equivalent to its parallel *n'kamah*, *vindicta*.

8. The fettering of heathen kings and the chastisement of heathen peoples are familiar features of the Messianic outlook. *Cf.* Is. xlv. 14.

9. *Judicium conscriptum*: the doom, or judgment decreed is variously interpreted as Yahweh's decree of extermination pronounced against the Canaanites (Deut. vii. 2), here transferred to the present enemies of Israel, or as the judgment in the Song of Moses, Deut. xxxii. 41*ff.*, or as the final judgment of Yahweh against the foes of the Messias. Whatever the doom in question may be, the execution thereof will be an honour to Israel. Jerome renders the last phrase, *Decor est omnium sanctorum ejus*.

PSALM CL

THE GREAT ALLELUIA!

THIS psalm is a sort of complement to Ps. cxlviii. As in Ps. cxlviii all creatures of heaven and earth and the Deep are invited to join in a great song of praise to their Maker, the God and Saviour of Israel, so here the universe is summoned to accompany its praising song with every kind of music, and with sacred dance. A psalm which represents creation joining in such a mighty symphony of praise is a fitting conclusion to the *Sepher Tillim*, 'The Book of Praising-songs.' Ps. cl may be regarded as the Doxology to the entire Psalter.

1. Alleluia.

Laudate Dominum in sanctis ejus: laudate eum in firmamento virtutis ejus.
2. Laudate eum in virtutibus ejus: laudate eum secundum multitudinem magnitudinis ejus.
3. Laudate eum in sono tubæ: laudate eum in psalterio, et cithara.
4. Laudate eum in tympano, et choro: laudate eum in chordis, et organo.
5. Laudate eum in cymbalis benesonantibus: laudate eum in cymbalis jubilationis:
6. Omnis spiritus laudet Dominum. Alleluia.

1. Alleluia.

Praise the Lord in His sanctuary:
Praise Him in His strong firmament:

2. Praise Him for His deeds of power;
Praise Him for His exalted greatness.

3. Praise Him with trumpet clang,
Praise Him with harp and zither!

4. Praise Him with tabret and dance;
Praise Him with strings and reeds!

5. Praise Him with sweet-sounding cymbals;
Praise Him with crashing cymbals!

6. Let all that hath breath of life praise the Lord!
Alleluia!

---

1. *In sanctis ejus*: Hebrew, 'in His Sanctuary.' The Sanctuary is either God's sanctuary on earth—the Temple in Jerusalem, or His dwelling in heaven. Since the psalmist speaks in this verse of the firmament it is more likely that the Sanctuary is the sanctuary of heaven.

Firmamento virtutis: 'His strong firmament.' The firmament, above which God has His dwelling, is Yahweh's unassailable fortress.

2. The *virtutes* are not the Angelic hosts, but the great deeds of the Lord. In *virtutibus ejus*='because of His mighty deeds.'

3. In the Temple-service the priests blew the trumpets: the Levites played the harp and zither; the women beat the timbrels; the sacred dance, the reeds, strings and cymbals belonged to the

worship of the people generally. Thus the summons in verses 3–5 is addressed to all the worshippers—the Priests, Levites, and the multitude of the laity.

Choro : this is the sacred dance. *Cf.* Ps. cxlix. 3.

Chordis et organo : with stringed instruments and with pipes.

5. There is no general agreement among commentators as to the exact meaning of the two kinds of cymbals. The Hebrew seems to mean : 'with full-toned cymbals . . . with crashing cymbals.' There is no sufficient reason for identifying the former (with some commentators) as castanets used by the women, and the latter as metal cymbals, such as are often used in modern military orchestras. Jerome renders : *In cymbalis sonantibus . . . in cymbalis tinnientibus.*

6. *Omnis spiritus* : 'everything which has the breath of life' (*n^e^shamah*). This is an appeal to every living thing—to heathen, therefore, as well as to Jew—to unite in praise of Yahweh. The universalism of the last psalm is thus, absolute. Here there is no hint of defeated foes of the Messias paying unwilling homage to their conqueror. There is here no suggestion of discord in the symphony of the universe. The Book of Psalms thus fitly ends with the Alleluia of all Creation.

APPENDIX

DE AUCTORIBUS ET DE TEMPORE COMPOSITIONIS PSALMORUM

Responsa Commiss. de Re Biblica, 1 Maii 1910

Dubium I. : Utrum appellationes *Psalmi David, Hymni David, Liber Psalmorum David, Psalterium Davidicum,* in antiquis collectionibus et in Conciliis ipsis usurpatae ad designandum Veteris Testamenti Librum CL psalmorum ; sicut etiam plurium Patrum et Doctorum sententia, qui tenuerunt omnes prorsus Psalterii psalmos uni David esse adscribendos, tantam vim habeant, ut Psalterii totius unicus auctor David haberi debeat ?

Resp. : Negative.

Dubium II : Utrum ex concordantia textus hebraici cum graeco textu alexandrino aliisque vetustis versionibus argui iure possit titulos psalmorum habraico textui praefixos antiquiores esse versione sic dicta LXX virorum ; ac proinde si non directe ab auctoribus ipsis psalmorum, a vetusta saltem judaica traditione derivasse ?

Resp. : Affirmative.

Dubium III : Utrum praedicti psalmorum tituli, indaicae traditionis testes, quando nulla ratio gravis est contra eorum genuinitatem, prudenter possint in dubium revocari ?

Resp. : Negative.

Dubium IV : Utrum si considerentur Sacrae Scripturae haud infrequentia testimonia circa naturalem Davidis peritiam, Spiritus Sancti charismate illustratam in componendis carminibus religiosis, institutiones ab ipso conditae de cantu psalmorum liturgico, attributiones psalmorum ipsi factae tum in Veteri Testamento, tum in Novo, tum in ipsis inscriptionibus, quae psalmis ab antiquo praefixae sunt ; insuper consensus Iudaeorum, Patrum et Doctorum Ecclesiae, prudenter denegari possit praecipuum Psalterii carminum Davidem esse auctorem, vel contra affirmari pauca dumtaxat eidem regio Psalti carmina esse tribuenda ?

Resp. : Negative ad utramque partem.

Dubium V : Utrum in specie denegari possit Davidica origo eorum Psalmorum, qui in Veteri vel Novo Testamento diserte sub Davidis nomine citantur, inter quos prae ceteris recensendi veniunt

psalmus ii "*Quare fremuerunt gentes*"; psalmus xv *Conserva me, Domine*; psalmus xvii *Diligam te, Domine, fortitudo mea*; psalmus xxxi *Beati quorum remissae sunt iniquitates*; psalmus lxviii *Salvum me fac, Deus*; psalmus cix *Dixit Dominus Domino meo*?

Resp.: Negative.

Dubium VI.: Utrum sententia eorum admitti possit qui tenent, inter psalterii psalmos nonnullos esse sive Davidis sive aliorum auctorum, qui propter rationes liturgicas et musicales, oscitantiam amanuensium aliasve incompertas causas in plures fuerint divisi vel in unum coniuncti; itemque alios esse psalmos, uti *Miserere mei, Deus*, qui ut melius aptarentur circumstantiis historicis vel sollemnitatibus populi iudaici, leviter fuerint retractati vel modificati, subtractione aut additione unius alteriusve versiculi, salva tamen totius textus sacri inspiratione?

Resp.: Affirmative ad utramque partem.

Dubium VII: Utrum sententia eorum inter recentiones scriptorum, qui indiciis dumtaxat internis innixi vel minus recta sacri textus interpretatione demonstrare conati sunt, non paucos esse psalmos post tempora Esdrae et Nehemiae, quinimo aevo Machabaeorum, compositos, probabiliter sustineri possit?

Resp.: Negative.

Dubium VIII: Utrum ex multiplici sacrorum librorum Novi Testamenti testimonio et unanimi Patrum consensu, fatentibus etiam iudaicae gentis scriptoribus, plures agnoscendi sint psalmi prophetici et messianici, qui futuri Liberatoris adventum, regnum, sacerdotium, passionem, mortem et resurrectionem vaticinati sunt; ac proinde reücienda prorsus eorum sententia sit, qui indolem psalmorum propheticam ac messianicam pervertentes, eadem de Christo oracula ad futuram tantum sortem populi electi praenuntiandam coarctant?

Resp.: Affirmative ad utramque partem.

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